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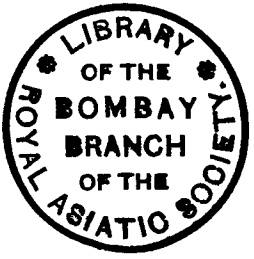
PARIS DAYS AND EVENINGS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MLLE. SUBRA.

PARIS DAYS AND EVENINGS

98851

BY

STUART HENRY

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS

Nat. x. 34

LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN
PATERNOSTER SQUARE
MDCCCXCVI

1896

ET IN LUTETIA EGO

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To

J. W. G

AND

J. H. S.

God
914.436
Heml Tarr
98851

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PHASES OF LIFE

Household Gods of Victor Hugo.

HOUSEHOLD GODS OF VICTOR HUGO.

AMONG the old buildings in that noiseless quarter of Paris which lies dreaming of its royal past under the walls of the Luxembourg, there is a house that leans away from the street, as if disdainful of our age. It has an antique portal and an Henri Quatre stairway. A vague tradition hints that some of the Medici resided in this hotel in the glorious and profligate days of Catherine and Marie. As one idles in its sombre rooms, with their lofty ceilings and venerable oak floors, and peers into the mysterious depths of its invisible wall closets, quaint

lines of the pensive Villon stray back into memory, and seem worth, in such a haunt, a hundred prophecies. Nowadays the apartments of the *bel étage* of this edifice are decorated and filled with mementoes of Victor Hugo. An hour may be pleasantly spent here by any hero-worshipper, for these souvenirs give glimpses of the great man in his home life, and lend interest to certain of his books and verses.

Of these relics, I fancy almost every person would ask to see first the pens that wrote "Les Misérables." They are here, at any rate, six of them—six modest quill pens, all fastened with a thread, side by side on a small piece of crumpled white paper. Just above them, in Victor Hugo's own hand, are the words, "*Plumes des Misérables.*" Their points are ink-blacked and well worn out, and their barbs show stubborn use. Traces of the sweat of hard toil cover the white surfaces of their shafts, because they are just as they were when they left the fingers of the *grand maître*. Steel pens did not come into noticeable service in France until about 1834, and Victor Hugo never used them in writing his manuscripts. Indeed a quill, with its broad, varying strokes and pliableness, was in every way more suited to his nature. And then the aristocratic associa-

tions of the quill, which seems to belong to the age of the sedan chair and the minuet, were probably quite agreeable to him, for, with all his democracy, he courted a title of nobility and a family tradition of caste.

"Les Misérables" is Victor Hugo. Perhaps there never was a more automorphic novel. It is read, I imagine, with more enthusiasm in America than in France. The French consider Victor Hugo their greatest poet, but not their greatest novelist. For them his fiction is too diffuse and shadowy.

The pens of "Les Misérables" repose by the side of an old companion—a black leather sack, carefully rolled up in two strong straps. It displays this inscription :—

"Since you request it, I attest here the little adventure of this sack. It travelled with me fifteen hundred miles in 1861, when I left Guernsey on account of my health. I carried with me the manuscript of 'Les Misérables,' which I completed *en route*. I put the manuscript in this sack, and this sack, which I did not abandon for a moment, voyaged with me in England, Belgium, and Holland five months—from March 26th to September 3rd, 1861. GUERNSEY, *May* 21, 1863. VICTOR HUGO."

By the side of the sack are several stones, bullets, and a rust-eaten horse-shoe. He picked them up on the field of Waterloo when writing his im-

mortal chapters on the battle. Each stone bears its legend: "Champs de Waterloo, ramassée par moi, 19 mai, 1861"; "30 mai, 1861—'Les Misérables'"; "9 juin, 1861, plaine de Waterloo"—and so on. Here also is the greasy cap which he wore when he escaped from Paris at the time of the *coup d'état.* It was given him for the purpose by one of his plebeian admirers—a journeyman printer.

The walls of these apartments are covered with panels, inside doors, screens and mirrors, all of which Victor Hugo ornamented with the brush during his exile. He never studied painting, but he had a talent for it, and, together with his promenades, it was his pastime. At the end of the salon is the red chimneypiece which he designed and embellished at Guernsey. Red was evidently the colour he preferred. In the centre of this chimneypiece there is a fine Venetian mirror. Four porcelain statuettes, representing the seasons, enliven its summits, and some Rouen faience is encrusted in its woodwork. At its sides are chimeras, and it rests on a black background, where the poet painted two large dragons and, in big letters as usual, the ubiquitous "V. H."

Naturally, as the leader of the Romantic school in France, he had a *penchant* for the

hideous animals that haunted the art, literature, and religious life of the Middle Ages. For he it was who embalmed the architecture of Northern France in the French language. He immortalised Notre Dame de Paris in a novel. He put Gothic architecture into appropriate rhyme; the expanding, upward sweep of its clustered columns, the pointed, aspiring curve of its arches, the rapid flight of its lofty buttresses, the delicate textures of its traceries and foliations; its monks and frightening monsters, its aërial galleries and fragile arcades, the slender heights of its soaring pinnacles and steeples—all he crystallised in poetry.

Notice how, in Ballad XII. of the "Odes and Ballades," the *o's, ou's,* and *ombre's,* in trisyllabic stanzas of eight lines, imitate the columned solemnity of the interior of a Gothic cathedral; the *elle's, ille's, ête's, être's, âte's,* and *êle's* its lace-like fringes and network; the *é's, i's,* and *ère's* its needle-form denticles and spires. And in the *omme's, onne's,* and *amme's,* how perfectly one hears the drowsy chant of mumbling priests!

One finds, therefore, among these household ornaments of the poet of the ogive, many dragons and gargoyles, and one discovers that, like the old cathedral builders and decorators, he

was fond of giving flight to unexpected, half-irreverent fancies. On one of the panels he painted a monk whose extremely doleful show of piety provokes laughter. His hands are devoutly clasped, and he is gazing up, with a most forlorn and sanctified mien, at the fiery avenging angel which appears above. On one of the inside doors there is a black, ugly jinnee. His arms and legs are crossed, and his eyes, mouth, and toes are fiercely red. It brings to mind the poem of "The Jinnees" in "Les Orientales," which is not only a successful description in rhyme of the passing of a troop of genii—the oncoming, the rushing by, and the dying away in the distance—but is interesting also for the fact that its first and last stanzas picture silence with surpassing charm and effectiveness. The hush of nature is put into the very form and *sound* of the verse :—

Murs, ville,
Et port,
Asile
De mort
Mer grise
Où brise
La brise
Tout dort.

On doute
La nuit . . .
J'écoute :—
Tout fuit,
Tout passe ;
L'espace
Efface
Le bruit.

Other favourite subjects of these decorations on wood are flowers, grotesque birds, and happy Chinamen. One of the Chinamen, with a dough-like face of celestial imbecility, is waving a fan ; and another is merrily cracking his heels together, over the back of a chair, in such a manner that his shadow and that of the chair form "V.H." on the floor. Victor Hugo's *cuisinière* for many years was an elderly faithful person called Suzanne. One day, after one of her savoury breakfasts, he said to her : "Suzanne, I am going to make a portrait of your future husband." And this is he on this plaque—a monstrous Chinaman seated at a table, and gleefully, but awkwardly, brandishing a fork as a preliminary to a gluttonous attack on a enormous fish. Just above is his name, *Shu-Zan.*

One's notice is especially attracted by three mirrors, on whose wide borders the poet painted flowers, vines, birds, and butterflies. One of these mirrors bears this inscription : "Drawn

May 11, 1870, while they are judging and condemning me at Paris." He referred, of course, to the Bonapartists. On the upper margin of this mirror there is an ink drawing of a château across the twilight. The colour of the natural pine adds a brilliant effect when a light is thrown on it at night. This recalls his wonderful habit of cleverly utilising and making the most of all the materials at his hand, however commonplace they were. For him no incident was too insignificant to become the theme of a poem or a chapter.

There are here, too, many of his pictures and drawings on paper surfaces, and they are sufficiently weird and sombre to entitle them to be hung in that *fin de siècle* Romantic exhibition, called the Rosicrucian Salon. Two curious drawings in crayon haunt the eye. One is of a majestic cock who is saluting the dusky gray of early morn—a surprisingly stately chanticleer, who gives emphatic evidence of the poet's natural skill with chalks. Another is a representation of John Brown—a shrouded form hanging from a scaffold. Dim streams of peculiar light fall on the mysterious figure as it defines itself vaguely against the dark background. It is signed "Victor Hugo, 1860." He was writing "Les Misérables" at the time.

The largest of these strange sketches has the legend of the book and the sword for its subject. It is a view of a black and ruined city. In the foreground, on the top of a lofty column, an aged prophet stands reading a volume. At one side is the sentence: "Non liber monet, non gladius servat."

Victor Hugo had a fancy for old oak furniture as well as for chimeras. It seems fitting that he should have had about him so much of the noble household ware of the Louis XIII. epoch. Its ampleness and strength suggest him at once. For instance, here is the fine oak table on which "La Légende des Siècles" was written. It is about two by four feet in size. Its legs are stout and twisted. It was apparently built to last as long as Notre Dame itself. On the worm-eaten top one reads: "Je donne à Madame . . . cette table sur laquelle j'ai écrit La Légende des Siècles [I give to Madame —— this table, on which I wrote 'La Légende des Siècles'].—Victor Hugo, Guernsey, 19 août, 1859." The ink-spots he left on it remain intact. In the way of historical furniture there may be mentioned a church stall which was in the "galerie de chêne" at Hauteville House, his home at Guernsey during exile. The words "VIVE AMA" were carved on it at his bidding. It

was occupied in olden times, it is said, by certain "Mesdames de France" whenever they were present at the ceremonies in the cathedral of Chartres.

The gem of these relics of Victor Hugo has to be taken out of an iron safe, and then out of a perfumed sachet of satin moire. It is the first copy of "Les Châtiments" of Hetzel's edition of 1872. It is on Holland paper, and has deep-red covers of shark skin. On the back are the gilt initials "V. H.," and embossed on the front is an immense, gold-embroidered bee. On one of the fly-leaves are the words: "First copy—At the feet of my Providence—To her who has saved more than my life—who has saved my manuscripts." He had reference to Madame Drouet's devotion to him at the time of the *coup d'état.*

On another page he wrote the following explanation:

"The bee which is on the cover of this book, before adorning the 'Les Châtiments,' adorned the imperial throne. It was embroidered on the velvet of the immense purple mantle which hung down in lambrequins from the canopy, and covered the throne at the Tuileries. In September 1870, M. Jules Claretie, member of the Commission appointed to search the papers of Bonaparte, detached this bee from the mantle of the throne, and brought it to me. VICTOR HUGO.

"PARIS, *May* 21, 1872."

On another fly-leaf of the book he transcribed the lines :

> " Filles de la lumière, abeilles,
> Envolez-vous de ce manteau ! "

These are taken from one of the most beautiful poems of the collection—" The Imperial Mantle." Bees were the Napoleonic emblem, and at Jersey, in June 1853, Victor Hugo addressed to them these verses, which are unsurpassed among French lyrics. How little did even he dream, perhaps, when grouping these rhymes as a derided exile, that a bee from Napoleon's disgraced and empty throne would one day repose on a volume of " Les Châtiments " as a unique witness of the poet's final triumph and assured glory !

One spring morning I was sitting on the balcony of this apartment of Victor Hugo's hearthstone gods, with the amiable and scholastic hermit to whom they have descended by legacy. He lives here, buried away from the present in his adoration of the great epoch of French Romanticism. We were taking a cup of coffee, and looking over into an old lost Paris garden, full of lonely trees and turtle-doves, and flanked by the closed façade of some ancient and forgotten hotel. I was asking my friend, to whom I had become attached by

many months of companionship, what was Victor Hugo's real character. And I wrote down the following little outline of an estimate of the illustrious man, dictated by one who was one of the household acquaintances during the last thirty years of the poet's life.

"Victor Hugo loved glory above all things, but his passion for money was abnormal. He was almost a miser. There was a pinched look in his face, and he had a way of holding his hands with the fingers pointed down and pressed together. He was extremely cautious and wary. It might not be quite true to say that he accumulated money for the mere pleasure of doing so, still it practically amounted to that, at least, during the latter half of his career. He was rich when the *coup d'état* occurred, and died a 'millionaire,' leaving fifty thousand francs to the poor, and the rest to his family. His family then consisted of a daughter hopelessly insane, a daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren. During his exile and during his last years in Paris, he gave frequently to the needy, yet in exceedingly small sums. He never endowed nor materially aided an institution of any kind. For him charity and pity for the miserable meant the expression of sympathy, not generous money donations nor

real personal sacrifice; and it must be confessed that this sympathy always found its way into such verse and prose that it brought him princely sums from his publishers. He was very methodical, and watched his affairs closely, even housekeeping details. He was a shrewd and careful business man.

"His egoïsm was colossal and his ambition unbounded, still one hardly would have suspected them from his bearing. He had such a quiet modest demeanour, he was so uniformly simple in his manner, he imposed himself so little on those about him, that you would not have guessed that it was all skilful acting. It was the most sublime egoism. I do not know that he fully realised it himself. The art was so natural, perfect, and even appropriate, that it might have passed for a virtue. It was agreeable to those around him, and he never was sensitive about it. One of his friends, a lady, once presented him with a quill pen, having 'Ego-Hugo' suggestively embroidered on it in silk. Far from being offended by it for a moment, he was amused and pleased. He was not proud, but he was vain. It should be remembered, however, that he had the unique fate of being surrounded for nearly seventy years by those who were always lauding his

genius in the most extravagant terms. Nevertheless, he was master of himself—of his passions as well as his mind. Whether he guarded or dismissed his ill-will toward a person depended on policy. None knew so well as he how to take care of and exploit a reputation.

"On the whole, he excelled in precisely those qualities which are least peculiar to his race, qualities which are associated with a powerful imagination. While he might very properly be called, in certain aspects, the Napoleon of his national literature, he was more Teutonic than French in the huge proportions of his ponderous literary arsenal. Yet, of course, he did not wish to be thought anything but French. In spite of his advocacy of the equality and brotherhood of man, he was Chauvinistic. He was fond, for instance, of recommending the formation of the United States of Europe, but it was with the tacit understanding that Paris would be the capital and France the leading state. He appeared to think that all civilisation would eventually become French. This belief in the overwhelming superiority of his race was encouraged by the fact that he knew little of the other people.

"It is not to be denied that his republicanism was due to the Second Empire's failure to satisfy

his own political aspirations. His career in politics was governed by personal motives rather than by a disinterested interest in the welfare of the people. He was too ambitious and politic to be what the world would call unqualifiedly a sincere man. Events governed him rather than principles. His eye was on the effect. The only reform he urged all his life without change was the abolition of the penalty of death for criminals—a reform which could be advocated safely, while serving his pen as a proper subject.

"Americans will find these traits characteristically displayed in his letter to the United States ('Actes et Paroles,' II.) written before the execution of John Brown. The gist of it is the prediction that the 'fissure latente' which this proposed 'murder' would cause, would end in dismembering the Union. There is no reference to the Slavery question, and no counsel or sympathy is given either to the North, the South, or the blacks. It was just what he intended it should be—a letter that no one could take exception to, that committed him in no way, and that sounded well. He thought the breaking out of the American Civil War was merely the penalty for the crime of America in hanging John Brown. No one equalled him

in making empty phrases resound like inspired wisdom and pregnant prophecy.

"There was much artificiality about his sentiment. On a page in one of his own texts of 'Les Misérables,' he pencilled this memorandum as if for his own guidance—'Here is a place to weep.' He was considerate, indulgent, in his home circle. His friends were enthusiastic and devoted admirers of his genius rather than of himself. His soul of souls was always veiled even to those dearest to him.

"He felt that he was a torch in the right hand of the Great Unknown. I think he really considered himself a part of Deity on earth. M. Deschanel, his eminent friend, is fond of characterising him by the line, 'Et maintenant, Seigneur, expliquons-nous tous deux' [And now, Lord, let us come to an understanding]. This trait in Victor Hugo was due, not to the typical French indifference about such things, but to his mighty belief in himself."

My Abbé.

(*July* 1894).

One who sojourns long in France is almost certain, sooner or later, to number among his acquaintances an Abbé—a soft-handed, smiling, unctuous Abbé. My Abbé—so I call him to myself affectionately—is about the dearest of my French friends. He is, indeed, a loose-shoed comfort to me, because, for one reason, I do not need to change my attire when I go to see him. This may seem a trivial matter, yet, with the months, it has come to mean much, and has persuaded me into many adventitious calls upon him which should have been distributed elsewhere on the little checker-board of my social acquaintanceship in Paris. For I may avow in all frankness, with the consciousness of revealing no secret, that my Abbé makes no pretension as a shining example of that virtue which we are assured comes next to godliness.

We first met across a game of chess at a soirée in the St Sulpice Quartier. As he had

only learned to play chess in his later years, and always lost his queen about the twelfth move, notwithstanding the unvarying crudeness of my openings and developments, we abandoned this hobby after a month or two for another and greater one that chanced to be common to us both—Victor Hugo. It would be drawing it mildly to say that the Abbé is daft, vertiginous, corybantic on the subject of Hugo, for there is a no more crazy *Hugolâtre* than he in all France.

The frenzy dates back to his youth. A dreaming Breton, he was born a full-fledged Romantic in the epoch of Madame Bovary, and he remains one still, ignoring later movements and schools. When a very young man—it was in 1869—he wrote to the great poet at Guernsey, naïvely begging for light amidst all the light that came pouring forth in those days from that isle. "Where," he prayed, "on what page, in what line, in what word, is the one central, fundamental, all-embracing truth of the thirty volumes of your inspired pen?"

The reply was couched in something like these terms: "Of course a letter, and many letters, would not suffice to respond adequately to your enquiry. My message is in no one phrase, in no one stanza, in no one volume of my writings.

To find it you must read them all, for it is therein that I have put my soul." The Abbé and I think that is one of the most solemnly beautiful and profound responses a mortal ever received from earth. While more prosaic people would see in this a scheme of the thrifty, money-making poet to induce the Abbé to buy the whole edition of his works, we perceive the revelation of a magnificent personality.

Imagine what delight it was for the Abbé to call at the modest hotel in the Avenue Victor Hugo during the poet's last years! One evening —how proudly he always recounts this!—he was in a corner of the salon alone with Hugo. The master was on a settee, the Abbé was on a stool at his feet. And the mighty genius of "La Légende des Siècles" and "Les Misérables" was answering his questions, and talking to him with the expansive freedom of a confidence, despite the presence of other guests. Finally, Madame Drouet came over in her tactful, august way, with the words: "Cher maître, we can spare you no longer to Monsieur l'Abbé—the other friends are beginning to notice how you are neglecting them." But Hugo waved her off with a peaceful hint of impatience, and a "Presently," and, as she quietly turned away, he said to the Abbé in an intimate undertone: "Don't be

disturbed; we can continue." Ah, what a triumphant, immortal moment that was for our humble friend!

"Oh, yes," said a Parisian *littérateur*, who happened to be present on one occasion when the Abbé was relating the incident, "it was sublime—if one could be sure that Hugo was not posing for you and the company. It was difficult to know whether he was genuinely simple and grandiose in his bearing and language under such circumstances, or whether he was one of the most consummate actors the world has ever seen off the stage. I was dining at Hugo's one day when Louis Blanc was present. I was placed at Hugo's right hand, and Louis Blanc, who, you know, was as big as your little finger, sat next me. Hugo served me first, somewhat to my confusion and to the half-disguised surprise of Louis Blanc, for I was a young and unknown fellow between those two famous old men. In one aspect it seemed truly republican and people-honouring in Hugo; yet it left me the half-relished souvenir that Hugo was merely trying to plague Louis Blanc at the expense of my insignificance. There was much of the *vieux malin* about Hugo, and I, for my part, never knew how to take him."

To return to the Abbé. One summer's night

found us under the walls of the great, gloomy Seminary of St Sulpice, plotting a series of excursions to the various forests around Paris for the purpose of reading some of our poet's verse in the open green-shaded air. As a result, on bright days we might have been seen taking the train for the woods of Clamart, or lazily sunning ourselves on some boat as it skimmed along on its way to Vincennes or down the river to the terrace of Meudon and the heights of St Cloud. The afternoon would be taken up with a superb passage in "Les Contemplations," or with some curious poem of "La Légende des Siècles," or with some high-plunging, big-thumbed ecstasy in "Dieu." For we read here and there and everywhere, without sequence or coherence, in Hugo's twenty volumes of rhyme, just as the mood stopped us or as fancy sped us on.

Now and then we would get lost in a thicket in one of the books, and once I asked the Abbé, "Why do you suppose Victor Hugo planted such scrub oak and underbrush as this in his verse?" The Abbé, in the utmost seriousness, approached his face close to mine, looked me gravely in the eye, and spoke as if it were a sacrilegious thing to be pointing out a defect in his idol. "I will tell you why, and I hope you will excuse me if I

employ a bit of slang. There is one idiom which expresses it so pat that I cannot well refrain from using it. The trouble with Victor Hugo is this: he thought that all the phrases he dashed off had the inspired touch of immortality, and that there were none such—'il se gobe!' (he swallows himself!)"

But it was grand when we were both swept up across magnificent spaces of the infinite blue by our poet, and once in a while the Abbé would close the book in a sort of seraphic paralysis, and try to find a sentence to girdle his beatitude, sometimes losing himself into silence as, with open mouth and eyes and outstretched hand, he would miss trace in the air of the nameless word he was just about to seize to describe his colossal wonderment and joy. Again, it would be some emotional passage in "Les Contemplations," and our tears would well softly forth, and we would blow our noses tenderly, half proud and half ashamed of the fact that we, two full-grown men, were sitting out in the broad light of the afternoon, and weeping over some simple rhyme.

Frequently the Abbé would chance to pick up "Les Chansons des rues et des bois," and read aloud from its satyr pages. It was a study for me to see him thoughtlessly grazing in these

half-forbidden pastures. Occasionally I would give him an opportunity to come to a realising sense of the situation, by asking him perhaps this: "Can you imagine why Victor Hugo, at the age of sixty-three, published such frivolous, such erotic verse, as all this?" The Abbé would look up, reflect for a moment, shake his head, and say: "Isn't it incredible? I have never been able to explain it." Then, after another pause, he would gently turn the leaf, and continue the *grisette* stanzas.

Yet I knew it could not be possible that he was really a little fond of these wanton-eyed, short-skirted gaieties. I was amused one day when, in reading the poem "L'Eglise" in "Les Chansons," he intoned these lines:

> "La plus belle feuille du monde
> Ne peut donner que se qu'elle a."

As the words came from his lips, I could not suppress a sound of laughter. He insisted on knowing what it meant, so I finally told him that these verses recalled a couplet of a certain Chat Noir song—indeed, that it was the identical couplet with one word changed. "Yes," he remarked naïvely, with the promptness and frankness of a momentary impulse, "I was thinking of that too." I said to myself: "Cecy

nous démonstre en toute évidence," as Balzac would have written at the close of a "Conte Drôlatique," that it is difficult, even for an Abbé in Paris, not to have caught a few rhymes of Xanrof on the branches of his memory.

But it would be unfair to intimate that the Abbé never indoctrinates one about any theme except Victor Hugo, for he talks eloquently on many a subject. For instance, he outlined a suggestive idea one morning, when an elderly friend was complaining to us of our *fin de siècle* in this fashion—"Our epoch has become too dangerously speculative in its commercial theories and business habits. Nowadays men count on making a fortune in five or ten years—they try to fabricate something out of nothing by a turn of luck, by a twist of the fancy, not by slow, honest effort and sure, accumulative methods. We have nothing in these times but speculators filling the air with unheard-of schemes, cultivating and exploiting unwarranted expectations in people, and demoralising the public with illusive projects that promise money without work or merit. . . . ."

"Yes," said the Abbé, "I believe it is worse in our day than ever; yet, suppose it is, are not

you and I, two old Romantics, directly responsible for it in a way? For it was precisely these fantastic, imaginative, emotional features and qualities which our Hugo school infused into letters and life—the sound and echo of noisy successes, of romantic luck and epic adventure and foolhardiness, always crowned in the end with good fortune. The traits that characterise the literature of an epoch are sure to characterise, sooner or later, the commercial world and business customs. Look at Hugo himself, skilfully making a din about his books, giving them a great *réclame*, 'booming' them, floating them at a fine price on the public, and dying a millionaire as the result! Our Romantic school was largely the cause of all this modern love of the incredible and trust in the possible."

A favourite pastime of the Abbé is to follow the lectures and examinations at the Sorbonne. One afternoon he took me over to the New Sorbonne to listen to the oral examination of a candidate for the Ph.D. Four professors—MM. Janet and Himly and two colleagues—were in array behind a desk, and were gaily roasting a squirming young man, who was dressed in a swallowtail and white kids, and was supposed to be sitting, with his back to the audience, in a chair on a small platform. In spite of the lively

St Lawrence spectacle, I soon felt drowsy and longed to drop away into dreamland, for the theme of torture was very abstract and dessicated. At length I could not repress my curiosity to look around and see if the Abbé were actually enjoying this lengthy and abstruse performance —and behold! there he was cosily asleep at my side! When he awoke, he seemed as glad to get away as I!

It is perhaps needless to say that the Abbé finds much to criticise in the Parisian literary critics and *conférenciers* of the present day, for—full-winged Romantic—he belongs to a past generation. He will hit off M. Brunetière in the following strain: "Yes, I have been over to the Sorbonne this winter and heard two or three of the lectures of M. Brunetière on Bossuet. Now, for my part, I, as an ecclesiastic, do not attach much importance to the discussion of church theses by *littérateurs*. Some of our Catholic people are delighted with the fact that Brunetière is glorifying one of our leading apostles, and have remarked to me—'Oh, we must stand by him; he is doing us immense good; here is a strong ally; he has come to us.' I do not understand it so. The first words with which M. Brunetière opened this series of lectures were these: 'Those who study Bossuet belong to

two classes—those who have faith, and those who have not. I may say frankly, and at once, that I am of the second class.' What is there in that for us?

"It was the same way with Taine. When he published the initial volumes of 'Les Origines,' many of our number clapped their hands, and exclaimed: 'See how he has taken up the cudgels for the Church—he is one of us now!' I was sceptical about him, for I lived round the corner from his house, and saw in his daily life no evidence of any change denoting that he had turned toward Catholicism. I was right, and his later books showed my friends their mistake.

"I know that M. Brunetière is rather the fashion to-day, yet I confess there is not much in him for me. To begin with, he is too pedantic. He is always displaying vast arrays of names of authors and authorities of all centuries, races, and kinds, known and unknown. He wishes to overwhelm you—to astonish you into silence by the length and breadth of his reading. He has read, unquestionably, many authors, but he has thoroughly digested few. He has never taken time to do so. He does not *live* with his authors. He writes in hot haste, and at the same moment, on several different topics, without waiting to let time

mature a judgment or ripen an opinion. These are feats of an acrobat—a juggler; it is not the highest form of literary criticism. His essays are full of rude projections and abrupt descents, of crude ridges and crags, and jagged valleys, which time has not smoothed down nor filled in. He approaches his themes too newly, and thrusts at us general impressions; first drafts, and when you examine his official-sounding language at the crucial point in his subject, you usually discover a 'perhaps' or 'it is probable' slipped in, showing that he leaves the real tug at the idea for someone else — he has merely scrambled together suggestions.

"So he thunders along alike on all questions and writers. He goes hammering through the most delicate prose and the most affecting verse, apparently unconscious of their true charm. He has no compassion, no sympathy, no affection—he is always metallic, arbitrary, and absolute; and still, if you turn back in his essays of ten years ago, you need not be surprised to find that he was saying the contrary of what he is saying to-day in the same authoritative manner. In our age we prefer to have subjects approached *humanly*, not dogmatically. Nothing that is absolute is human. We do not like to be whipped into line in *belles-lettres*, as if we were

always more or less benighted or wilfully aberrant. Absolutism inevitably means a narrow or superficial outlook—prejudices.

"M. Brunetière piques himself on being an impersonal critic, yet he is the most personal of them all. His enmities in the flesh are decidedly pronounced. If some one whom he does not like holds an opinion about the thesis he is treating, he is quite sure to take a reactionary view. His style—his language—is very effective as it comes from his lips. He is an orator—the most successful one I have ever heard in a chair of literature; but his paragraphs become abominably poor French when put into print."

As for the other celebrated lecturers in the Rue des Écoles, the Abbé is no less exacting. He is not disposed to emphasise their admirable and unusual qualities. He will say: "M. Deschanel, as a *conférencier*, is too light and amusing to suit my taste. He loves to make the ladies titter. And Larroumet also is a lady's professor. Of course, the ladies—you know my notion about them—I say, call it pretty and inoffensive if you will, still, for what I hold to be literature in its best sense, all this is of precious little value. M. Faguet? Well, M. Faguet is very adept, clever, ingenious, able in fact, but he is—how shall I express it?—a kind of *farceur*.

I mean that letters have become a routine with him. What he seeks is not to be constructively helpful, and to be working in an orderly and responsible way, so much as to be original, gymnastic, diverting. He has the air of saying to his classes: "Now, let us go at this—it's our *métier*, you know—we must get through with it; so let us do it creditably, and with as little *ennui* as possible."

It is a pity to introduce these severe lines into the tender, amiable picture of my Abbé, yet I should not be wholly true to my theme if I did not do so, for he, like other mortals, has his austere moods, when he shows that he can trace a sharp angle, and be as keenly incisive as the critics themselves. So let us hasten to finish this portion of the sketch by noting that, with all his gentleness, sentimentality, and love of the ideal, he draws the line at woman. He seems to have a veritable fear of her. I have never heard him speak of his mother or a sister.

He was remarking one evening: "I cannot bear to have even a maid-servant in the house. A woman used to come in and cook my meals and take care of my room. She was eternally pricking me with interrogation points, and pestering me with household attentions. She

would ask me two or three times a day what I wished for the next meal. I became tired of it, and told her she might do my room and I would prepare my own repasts. Finally I said to myself, 'If you can cook, you can do your own chamber work'—so I dismissed her. What a comfort to feel that you are not to be interrupted every hour by a *femme de ménage!* It is always a relief to me to know there is not a woman about the premises."

To reinvoke, then, if we can, something of the blowsy serenity of the Abbé. Last summer he was offered, and urged to accept, a tempting office connected with the Hierarchy in Rome. He remarked to me: "They wanted me to come to Rome. Should I go or not? This incident greatly troubled my tranquillity. My friends said: 'What! refuse an opportunity to be in the highest ecclesiastical circles?' I at last told them: 'No! I am a Frenchman, and love my liberty! There is no place like Paris for me. I prefer to be free and tied to no one—not even to a cardinal!'" This partly answered the query I had often propounded to myself: "Is the Abbé a Frenchman first, or a Catholic? Is he religious before he is patriotic?"

One evening last October he came to see me, and divulged the secret that in three weeks he was

to preach a sermon in a village near Versailles. He appears in the pulpit so seldom, and fears so much any light of publicity, that he confided his undertaking to me as if it were a confession. And to prevent me from being present, he refused to give the name of the parish. But he recited to me his sermon, which he had already written and memorised. It had been scrupulously and affectionately polished, and, with its lyrical flights, was as tender and poetical as a lover's song.

Last winter the Abbé became the almoner of a Hospital, or Refuge, in a hamlet that crowns a low-lying hill a mile or two south of Paris. One afternoon in May I went out by train in quest of him, for I had not heard from him for some time. I rang the bell at the great green faded portals of his ancient hermitage, once the hunting seat of a favourite of Louis XV. The doors opened, and there, in an old grass-checkered court, and not three feet away from me, stood the most beautiful nun I have ever beheld. Fra Angelico might have dreamed of her. She was dressed in a black and cream-coloured garb, and wore the conventional white band around her face. Her features seemed celestial in their regular outlines and in their soft cast of sweet serenity. Her beauty, and the fact that it had

not occurred to me that a woman would be seen in the haunts of the Abbé, trifled somewhat with the poise of my question as I asked her if I might see him. She conducted me, with her clattering sandals, through several doors and halls. We came to a gate in a garden wall, and, as it opened in response to her summons with a bell, she bade me "Bonjour, Monsieur," and disappeared.

I found myself in a small square garden full of cherry-trees in bloom, and made my way to the house that stood at one side. I surprised the Abbé in the loveliest of moods in his room, for he had just come out of a delicious nap. We began participating at once in one of our communions of souls. He described how he had dreaded the thought of quitting Paris, and how soon he had learned to adore the country and his life here of a hermit. His four walls were in reality narrow and low, yet he lengthened them into the spaciousness of a palatial gallery in the stretches of his musing on the past and on the future; and no mural decoration, he said, could be more sumptuous than that with which his fancy ornamented his cell.

When he spoke of his solitude, I could not refrain from hinting that there seemed, nevertheless, to be maidens to open the gate to his flowery bower, and that some people might

think that even a Piagnone painter was to be envied if such were the circumstances. . . . The Abbé did not appear to notice the suspicion of a jest, and I did not urge my timid impeachment. He simply remarked: "Oh, there are two or three hundred women and girls over the wall there, but they do not trouble me, for I do not confess them, and then I have a private door into the street through which I come and go without being seen by anyone."

As we talked, we looked out of his window over little fragrant fields of flowers and fruits, and smoothed our vision along the long ribbons of green, villa-dotted hills. He told me that all men were more or less egoists; that he himself was something of an egoist though his life and mission were so lowly, for, while he abjured wealth, ambition, and what the world at large called pleasure, and asked for nothing except a bed and some food and raiment, and leisure to bathe his soul in the firmament, his career was, after all, the choice and product of his indolence. "And really," he said, "do we now owe our first duty to ourselves, and should not that first duty be gentleness? 'Il faut être doux envers soi-même' (One should be gentle to himself) is the favourite of my mottoes. When in doubt as to what course to pursue, I always ask myself,

'Which path promises to be softest to my footsteps?'"

Then he read some modest-eyed verses that he had addressed to the first violet that peeped up in his garden in February. I discovered a few leaves of his love poesies, for, notwithstanding his enmity to woman, he often fondles Cupid in his metres. And when one of his madrigals ended with "Et mourir de ne pas mourir" (And die because one cannot die), I exclaimed that it was worthy the lines of Oronte in "Le Misanthrope":—

> "Belle Philis, on désespère,
> Alors qu'on espère toujours."

The differentiation of friendship and love offered by another of these poems wedded my memory:—

"*Friendship*—one soul of which two hearts have each a half. *Love*—one heart inhabiting one soul."

Of all his poems I have heard, only one was not an offertory on a sentimental or sublime theme. This one was dedicated to a certain countess, whom the Abbé had formerly known when she was always clothed in black. It recounts that when he was walking along the street one day, she drove past arrayed in

brilliant stuffs. She acknowledged his salutation in an indifferent manner, whence this verse. It revealed the unpleasant fact that she was haughty and a redoubtable *bas bleu;* and in these last lines the Abbé condescended to take a mortal's revenge :

> " Quoique vous en fassiez,
> Vous serez toujours laide,
> Et pédantesque et raide."

(For, whatever you do, you will always be ugly, pedantic, and stiff.)

His own rhymes finished, then came of course his recitations of Hugo, and we soared aloft on expanded wing among the heights of "Les Contemplations." Toward five o'clock a faint rap at his door meekly announced that the vesper hour was approaching. We went down to the fruit and flower garden which lies in front of the long white façade of the château. It was laid out in the Lenôtre fashion a hundred and fifty years ago. The Abbé, with his fat hands sanctimoniously folded athwart his abdomen, led my nervous, zigzag, secular steps quietly and minutely along the straight and narrow gravelled walks hedged with vine-trained fruit trees. Flowers weighted the air with dense incense in this virginal retreat. Here and there I caught a glimpse of some self-communing nun slowly

eclipsing into a quincunx, or winding her way leisurely in intricately intersecting and closely clipped alleys lined with cool shrines and stations of the cross. Then the Abbé accompanied me to his private gate, and closed me out into the gray-walled street with his usual warm hand-shakings and his fervent "Au revoir —à bientôt."

And as I walked back to Paris along the gray highway, with the vesper bells chiming in my ears, I thought how widely different this Breton and priestly temperament was from any I had ever intimately known; how far it was separated from me by race, and time, and life itself; and yet how near it seemed; how fully it belonged to the Middle Ages with its faith, romantic emotions, and imagination; and how it made for the love of humble peace and tenderness, with its "Il faut être doux envers soi-même."

Here was a living example close to my consciousness of the manner in which one can be absorbed away from the earth and up into celestial realms, and can repose on the bosom of the Beyond. The Abbé has shown me a velvet, downy soul in the traditional Catholic sense. He has shown me how infinitely sweet it is for a priest to let himself float softly, and yield all to the caresses of his religion. He

has illustrated for me how one, in the old and true Christian meaning, can be nothing, do nothing, have nothing, and still be happy, and pass his years in praising God for His innumerable gifts and blessings.

A Great Fashion House.

THE two proprietors of this fashion house in the Rue —— lead the easiest of business lives. They are not to be seen here until about two o'clock in the afternoon. The senior gentleman sells four or five robes as his daily task, and then goes over to his club for repose. He returns about six o'clock to consult the totals of the day's traffic, and if they are satisfactory, he smiles and is full of compliments to every one.

The prosperity of the firm is due to the junior member, because he conceives and creates the styles launched from these doors. His designs display variety, daring, and grace, and are reputed nowadays to be the most *chic* of all those afloat in Paris. For this reason the house has reached, within a few years, an annual aggregate of ten million francs of sales, and employs within its walls five hundred persons. This gentleman prepares in February his models

for the warm season, and in August he groups his fashions for cold weather. Thus his apartment in winter is decked in summer goods, and in midsummer it is clothed in furs and thick hibernal stuffs. He is always three months ahead of the world at large. Very likely no man in France is so flattered as he by ladies. Princesses, wealthy heiresses, actresses, daily rehearse before him their admiration of his taste, and give evidence of how essential he is to their mundane successes and happiness.

The desperate means embraced by some women, whose purses are lean, to get without cost a robe devised by him expressly for them is illustrated by the case of a person who recently wrote him that she had a rather graceful figure and pretty face ("joli minois") which perhaps might suggest to him new combinations in gowns. For, of course, the varying female types are indispensable to the quest of novelties in dress. He sent her word in response that he should be pleased to "contemplate" her physiognomy." When she arrived, he saw at a glance that she did not possess a sufficient beauty or grace to be an inspiration to him, so he politely foiled her attempt to procure a toilet for nothing by affecting not to understand precisely what she desired of him.

About the first of August, when he begins to think of his autumn and winter designs, representatives of wholesale establishments show him samples of their new materials—silks, woollens, embroideries, pearls. He studies the samples, forms his general conceptions, and sends for the "living mannikins." All is done in private, so that even the *personnel* may be surprised. A few days pass, and some afternoon he suddenly opens the door of his *atelier*, and twenty-five living models, arrayed in costumes never seen before, file out and through the salons, while he observes the effect his latest creations produce upon the *employées*. This is his *jour de vernissage*, for, like a painter, he is an artist in colours and forms. Buyers from foreign lands—Russia, Spain, the United States—are the first to revel in these virgin patterns. It is not until the end of September that the French customers appear on the scene.

Of the five hundred women employed here, about one hundred receive regular salaries, and are breakfasted and dined at the expense of the firm on the fifth floor of the building. The *cuisine* is not without pretensions. These salaried *employées* are somewhat free to come and go during the day, as their hours are not specially watched. The other four hundred are

paid usually by the hour. The doors are open to them daily at nine o'clock, and those who have not reported by five minutes later lose a half day's wages. Fancy the spectacle of four hundred women and girls crowding each morning before an entry in one of the principal streets of Paris. The *clientèle* begins to arrive at ten o'clock and does not leave before seven. Formerly the hours of the *employées* were very severe. The new law interdicts night work after nine o'clock. Night watchers are apt any evening to make a tour of a business place in the French capital, and the proprietors who violate this statute are subject to a heavy fine, and to imprisonment if they persist in transgressions. A permission on *papier timbre* to exceed the statute hours can be obtained from a *commissaire de police* for the circumstance, if there is now and then a rush of trade.

Twelve men tailors are employed—Germans, Austrians, Italians, and one Frenchman. The house finds the native workman too exacting.

The *personnel* has all fête days free, besides a fortnight's vacation in summer during the *morte saison*. At the fête of Saint Catherine (25th November) a dinner is given here by the firm—a fine repast irrigated copiously with champagne, and followed by a *sauterie* (a hop). The girl

who is nearest the age of twenty five is adorned with a bonnet ("coiffée d'un bonnet"), and becomes the butt of the company in accordance with the familiar French expression for old maidenhood—*coiffer Sainte Catherine*. Naturally, on this occasion, there is much disguising of ages. Only the hundred salaried *employées* are present; it is a dinner and a ball for women. The proprietors and the manager, however, appear at the foot of the stairs to see the ladies file up to the banquet table—"voir la montée au diner"; and, during the dance, the seven or eight town agents (*placiers*) of the house are admitted. A few of the gayest of the girls disguise themselves in piquant costumes, and the frolic toward the close becomes somewhat dishevelled.

The day after New Year's, an affectionate custom is rigorously observed. Each salaried person must then pay her respects to the two proprietors and to the manager, and let them kiss her. The hundred *employées* repair to the store about ten o'clock in the morning, and are kissed by the junior member of the firm and the manager. They then wait until two o'clock for the senior proprietor, who drives down here with his wife. This gentleman and his lady receive the hundred people, one at a time. He kisses each *employée*, and she

kisses Madame, who presents her with a package of iced chestnuts (*marrons glacés*) as she gives way to one of her mates—"et la corvée est achevé," to quote the consecrated phrase of the *personnel.*

The "living mannikins" are tall, well-proportioned young women, with waists not larger than 19½ inches, and with an elegant gait. Two or three of them have 18¾-inch bodices. From morning until night, day after day, they do nothing but don robes and promenade through the apartments before the *clientes.* Usually they pass but once back and forth past the purchaser, thus offering the front and the back view of a toilet. One of these "mannikins" is very blond and pretty, and disports to advantage in *matinées, déshabillées,* laces, and pale stuffs. Such *ensembles* harmonise deliciously on her and ravish the *cliente,* who perhaps does not hesitate to order a similar pattern without reflecting how much her own complexion and figure differ from those of the "mannikin." She is apt to be disappointed when she essays the gown at home, and probably will return and emphasise how it fails to please her and her friends. If she is a valuable *cliente,* the dress will be taken back, the loss pocketed, and another toilet clustered for her. If she is not a good customer, she will

not succeed in making any one comprehend her complaints or wishes.

Seven or eight of the twelve *vendeuses* (saleswomen) are of a certain age. The youngest is about twenty-two. Their income is handsome, for they have, besides their salaries, a percentage on the cost of all the articles they sell.

The *essayeuses* (the women who fit the robes) abuse the *clientes* freely, for the customer knows that she is wholly at the mercy of the *essayeuse* for the triumph of her costume. A rendezvous is arranged between them. At the hour named the lady will enter a *salon d'essayage*, and then wait an hour or two while the *essayeuse* idles in her *atelier*, or runs personal errands about town. When at last she concludes to appear, she easily disarms by a smile the lady in waiting, who, for that matter, is ready to endure almost anything in order to have a prettier sleeve than that of Madam X——, which is so much admired in the Bois.

The foreign *clientèle* is, in the main, the most profitable. Mrs —— Vanderbilt averages yearly eighty divers—robes, cloaks, capes, and what not—at a total cost of about 50,000 francs. Her evening dresses run from 1200 to 1500 francs each. A Frenchwoman pays by far the largest bills. She spends here 180,000 francs a year

for robes, mantles, and laces. She is said to affect styles of her own, and to present, instead of taste and *chic*, merely an unusual display as a toiletted woman, being too elegantly dressed not to be taken for what she is—a person of an irregular station in life.

The fashions are advertised by the actresses, and particularly by the *demi-mondaines;* but of course at their own real or intended expense. The cost of their average costume is 700 francs. The *demi-mondaines* are the first to come out with the new designs. As Paris leads the styles, and as the courtesan leads them in Paris, the syllogistic conclusion is inevitable that the modes of the world are introduced by the *femmes galantes.* This, however, appears always to have been the case.

Many great actresses and singers, who create enormous annual bills here, never pay, and are, therefore, a steady drain on the profits. Since these *artistes* in reality publish the house by promenading its toilets, it does not dare to pursue them legally, nor refuse to dress them when they come for a new toilet. One of them—an actress celebrated across both continents—regularly insists that the bill be sent her with each delivery of goods. Now and then she requests that her account be made up in full. The collector

accordingly presents himself at her hotel with the totals. She remarks that the additions are correct, then thanks him in such a way that he can only politely withdraw, and that is the end of the matter, until another series of her orders provokes a repetition of the performance. She is the one person whose garbs the house tries on for her in her own home. All the other *clientes* come to the store.

Another large source of loss is the costuming of plays, for a theatre has the best, and can pay but a modest sum. As a rule, the robes of a comedy cost this house 800 francs each, and it receives about 500. A play like "Madame Sans-Gêne" is toiletted at a great loss to the establishment that undertakes it, yet what an advertisement! It must be remembered, too, that this is the only means of advertising employed. There are no "ads.," even in journals.

These affairs of theatres are at the same time very troublesome. For instance, a noted French actress was playing in London last June, and suddenly became aware that her rôle robes, which had come from our house, were barely hanging together because of constant use. She telegraphed for duplicate costumes to be composed and sent at once. Everything was turned up side down under the stress of the circumstance,

and in three or four days an *expéditeur* was on his way to London in charge of a fresh supply of toilets.

Another instance. The same actress was on the bills at the Vaudeville. She wished to transfer to Brussels without losing a night. In the afternoon of the day before her departure she had tried on the last gown of a new series, and not wishing to trust the carefulness of the house about delivering all the articles, they were transported to her *loge* that evening, and she made the verifications there during the *entr'actes.* The next morning, after she had taken the train, it was discovered that the belt of one of the dresses had been left behind. A courier was at once despatched with it to Brussels, and arrived in time for the play.

The spectacle of famous women to be seen in our establishment during the afternoon in the busy season is entertaining in many ways. In enters, perhaps, the Grand Duchess of Leuchtenberg, with her *air de gendarme,* as the *employées* term it. She does not suffer an instant's delay, and is difficult in all particulars. The actresses of the Comédie Française do not often come here, for the prices are fantastic. Occasionally Madame Baretta-Worms may be discovered at a counter, always wearing a rare sweetness of face, and

never making any noise or trouble. She is indeed as estimable as she is lovely, and displays more tender womanliness in her rôles than any other actress in Paris. Seldom is Madame Bernhardt to be viewed in these haunts, but, when she appears, her vehicle is of such a bizarre make, and her page is dressed in such exotic extravaganzas of hue and cut, that a crowd of people are sure to gather at the door to see her drive away.

Réjane and her husband, M. Porel, are frequently to be met with here. Réjane acts and talks in private as on the stage, with her "Oh ben!" and "Quéqu ça me fait?" and her Madame Sans-Gêne manners. She is the embodiment of that good-hearted and loyal type called "the daughter of the people," and would certainly have been the wife of one of Napoleon's marshals had she lived in that day.

In rushes perhaps the *tambour-major* of light opera in Paris—Jeanne Granier—with her mouth full of desperate news. Judic has sprained her ankle this morning, and cannot sing at the Variétés to-night. Granier must replace her, and therefore has three dresses to try on this afternoon and a Spanish and an English song to learn. Some *employée* who knows Spanish accompanies her to a *salon d'essayage*, and

"whispers" the words of the Iberian ballad to her while her garbs are fitted. Then another assistant, who speaks English, ascends to repeat to her the lines of her English song—"Mistair Brauwn—Came to tauwn—Who deed that?" In two hours she is done, and goes away to regale the public at the Variétés with her three toilets and with her two character songs, of which she does not understand a word, to say nothing of the meaning. This will not prevent her, however, from rendering the ditties to perfection. Once in a while an actor comes in to be corseted for a travesty. Imagine Baron being adjusted to a robe to represent Phryne!

It may be interesting to conclude by noting what some French *employée* in our establishment thinks of the taste in dress of the women of other nationalities. One of the ladies here has kindly favoured me with some of the results of her observations—impartial *bien entendu*. Of course she rightly holds that the Parisienne far surpasses all emulators for *bon goût*—true elegance—in costumes. Next to her she ranks the Englishwoman who comes over every season in her "eternal" white dress, black gloves, and piebald hat, to make her selections. Like the Parisienne, she endeavours to please, to charm, with her gowns, and to appear to the best

advantage under all circumstances. For instance, both are careful always to sit before a mirror in the salons here, while their rivals of other races are quite heedless, or ignorant, of the effect of environment, and are as apt to station themselves before a window, or a crude group of colours, as anywhere. The English lady, and notably the French lady, seem for ever conscious that some æsthetic masculine eye may be upon them. The *Anglaise* has a creditable desire for grace and lightness in her cuts of garment and in the *ensemble* of her toilet. Yet she is fond of many materials and many hues. The matchless success of the *Française,* in comparison, is due not only to her superior instinct for grace and lightness, but to the relative simplicity and chariness in her harmonies and contrasts of textures and tints.

The typical American lady who appears here insists on a variety of goods and a diversity of colour in her apparel. Her garbs must display ampleness, fullness, so that the observer may be struck by the quantity of variations, and hence the cost. Her aim apparently is to impress the general public with the evident expense rather than to appeal to the æsthetic sense of the few by tasteful and simple tones. Her knowledge of the art of shades and of what becomes her is

limited, for she does not seem to take the trouble to study herself well in the glass. A designer prepares for her each season some models of robes containing a little menagerie of features, and presenting, accordingly, a kaleidoscope of colorations and materials. An uninitiated *employée* will sometimes say to him: "Why did you invent such a horror of a dress? It will not sell." "Wait and see. The first *Américaine* who comes in *sautera dessus*" (will snap it up).

The *Américaine*—to follow still our informant—is not *coiffée* with care; her hair is not well combed. Her ways are brusque and steely. The English lady is stiff in her attitudes and bearing, and the *Américaine* has a loud, harsh voice. But while the *Parisienne* and the *Anglaise* are tedious about coming to a conclusion, and go away, return and hesitate, the *Américaine* makes up her mind quickly, and, once decided, that is the end of it. She is by far the best business woman of them all. "Elle ne se laisse pas rouler" (she does not let herself be imposed on). Being more energetic than the others, the *Américaine* is the most exacting about the time set, and apparently never has a moment to lose. She is constantly saying in her grating tones: "Now, mind you, if that dress

isn't there by twelve o'clock sharp to-morrow, you can keep it."

The German lady prefers substantial stuffs—goods that last. Her habiliments are warm, heavy, solid, and have a domestic and economical look. She chooses crude colours, and likes masses of them—maroons, greys, yellows, greens.

The Russian lady is cold, reserved, dignified, and very "just." She has an air of honorability and distinction, and her *face à main*, for she is nearly always a myope, adds to her courtly manner. She inspires respect and a certain loyalty. Her toilets are more severe than those of the other women—never *chamarré*. Her favourite colours are white and black—clear. Her style is "plat"; her garbs fall flatly about her, and give the effect of a rigid perpendicularity.

A Breakfast Colloquy.

Place—Avenue Kléber. *Time*—Noon.

The Orator—As I was just saying, America and Russia are so immense that it is almost impossible for the French to surround them—to appreciate them. A Frenchman is fond of and accustomed to small things, because of his sense of precision.

The Chicago Lady (*being helped to fish*)—And if colossal, then of a fragile symmetry like the Tour Eiffel——

The Cynical Guest—I never look at the Tour Eiffel without thinking how Simeon Stylites missed his chance by living fourteen hundred years too soon.

The Orator—I have sometimes felt that Victor Hugo and Wagner should have belonged to some vast country. Victor Hugo scarcely had elbow-room here in France. He did not write his greatest verse until he began living on an island in the sea.

The Cynical Guest—Oh, America is big enough—it's too big. Living in France destroys

one's love for mere immensities. One half of a country is always being misgoverned for the benefit of the other half. The half west of the Mississippi will cut off from the east half some day.

THE CHICAGO LADY—Never! Never! That question was settled for ever thirty years ago. Chicago will hold all America together. I love large countries, large cities, large organisations.

A SORBONNE STUDENT (*an erudite of nineteen, with an Ovid in one pocket and a Tasso in another*)—That is a Romanesque feeling—a nineteenth century mode.

THE ORATOR—In big countries and organisations they say the individual is apt to be effaced.

THE CHICAGO LADY—The individual cannot be said to be effaced in America. On the contrary——

THE STUDENT—Nor in France. Who can be more independent than the average French working-man? He is the synonym of personal liberty.

SOMEONE—The effacement of the individual is the vital principle of monarchism.

THE ORATOR—You mean as regards the lower and the middle classes, but not the aristocracy.

The effacement of the individual is an illusive expression.

SOMEONE—Caste is effaced in France and accentuated in England.

THE CYNICAL GUEST—Oh, everything is effaced to some extent. Take even the typical Irishman—his nose is effaced if his mouth isn't.

SOMEONE—Haven't the most successful nations and religions been small?—Greece?—The Quakers?

THE CYNICAL GUEST—One gets worn out with great uniformities and regular symmetries and models. Who does not prefer nowadays individualistic, half-homely portraits by Aman Jean, rather than ideal types like Bouguereau's.

A YOUNG LADY (*from Boston, and studying painting in Paris*)—Oh, I think Bouguereau is too perfectly lovely for anything.

THE ORATOR (*taking a cutlet*)—It is very true that, with respect to immensities, one is inclined to stop at the surface and be amazed at the enormity of the contours. Still, we must not overlook the fact that, together with the contracting sense in the French—their proneness to solidarity—there is their tendency to ignore the interior—the inward. They have intelligence and art enough here for several countries, but the conscience is too often ignored—the grand

and dignified personal emotions, the fullest moral significance.

THE CYNICAL GUEST—The heart and the brain are eternal enemies. It is always said that Cambridge is the leanest town in America from the heart side, and at the same time the most intellectual.

THE YOUNG LADY—How absurd!—I never heard of such a thing!

THE YOUNG MAN FROM IOWA—Why, that's one of the proverbs in minor America—that part west of the Hudson.

THE YOUNG LADY—Oh, the slander! You people from the West are always trying to abuse us. You are so—"breezy," not to say—(triumphantly) you always make me feel like parodying my favourite poem—

> "From the prairies I come to thee,
> On a blizzard shod with—soap!"

THE IOWAN—In denying the soft impeach—

THE YOUNG LADY—But it's not the *soft* article I'm giving you.

THE STUDENT—Was not Bayard Taylor from the West?

THE YOUNG LADY—Why no, he was from Pennsylvania.

THE STUDENT—But was not that the West to you in Boston when he wrote that poem?

THE YOUNG LADY—Well—really—I must confess that was before I was born.

THE ORATOR (*laughing*)—Why, our Iowa friend believes that Eden was in the Mississippi valley.

THE IOWAN—No, in the light of our recent American events, I have transferred Eden over into Atlantis, and hold now that the city of Is off the Brittany coast was its metropolis. As Atlantis went down, this eastern continent came up, and Adam simply stepped across.

THE ORATOR—But that road which runs down and is lost in the sea in Cornouailles?

THE STUDENT—That road was only a Roman road. It was where the last of the Romans drove down in a chariot into the ocean and drowned himself.

THE ORATOR—Rather plausible, for a Roman never could do anything until he had built a road.

THE CYNICAL GUEST—He must have lived in one of those palatial Roman villas which lined the western coast of France, and had hot and cold water all over his farm, so that he could raise peanuts and cranberries side by side.

THE STUDENT—When they drain Atlantis they will find a lot of things—the head of the Nile, for instance. Think of this from old Ovid

(*whipping his Ovid out of his pocket*): "The frightened Nile ran and hid its head, nor can it yet be found."

THE CYNICAL GUEST (*forking a pickle*)—It was evidently under the impression that it was an ostrich.

THE STUDENT—Perhaps that was where the ostrich got the idea.

THE ORATOR—Strange the French have not made more of that lovely legend of the city of Is. If the Germans had had it, they would have exploited it.

SOMEONE—Lalo composed an opera called "Le Roi d'Ys."

THE ORATOR—The French poets, after all that has been said, are much more concerned about the existence of God than interested in legends. That should be said for their credit—their verse shows it.

A GUEST—Yes, I have just been reading sixteen hundred pages of Sully Prudhomme to find out if he has any faith. I have come to the conclusion that he believes in Deity.

THE ORATOR—In his verse if you will, but not personally. I happened to meet him at a dinner not long ago, and he was saying at the table: "I will tell you simply and frankly how it is—I cannot bring myself to believe in the

Christian God, because I cannot reconcile all the sufferings in this world with the thought of a Heavenly Father."

THE CYNICAL GUEST—The poets are like the politicians—they never write what they mean.

THE ORATOR—Speaking of the love of immense things, I admit there is a sort of barbarism in it. Yet there is the cathedral—what is so ennobling and truly magnificent as a Titanic cathedral? How it draws one out and up! I say that the interior of the Gothic cathedral is one of the greatest boons to mankind—the Greeks never produced anything so sublime. Think of Amiens! It is not the façade—it is the sweep of the interior. The interior is the soul of the Gothic church.

THE YOUNG LADY—Oh, I love church façades. I could live for ever in a little room across the square from the façade at Orvieto, and do nothing but look at it and drink Chartreuses from Val d'Ema.

THE STUDENT (*eating Roquefort*)—All those green, yellow, purple liqueurs. I see, you would match them off, as it were, against the polychromy of the church front.

THE CYNICAL GUEST—She means that that's the way she would drink in the colours of the façade.

THE YOUNG LADY (*cutting a pie*)—If some people loved polychromy more, and polyphony less, what a repose there would be for the other inhabitants of earth. I mean just what I was saying. Whenever I saw that façade and sipped those Chartreuses, all mediævalism seemed to pass across my consciousness.

THE CYNICAL GUEST—What refinement of defining! I never heard it called the Middle Ages before. Usually it's called "snakes in the boots," or something of that sort.

A LADY—Façades give me little satisfaction. They are so seldom correctly constructed—there is something wrong about the theory of them. I tried to make a study of them during the twelve years I lived in Italy, and they only appeared to grow more and more incongruous to me. Haven't architects practically given up the problem? Think of the new façade at Florence, and that one of the Trocadéro, which they abandoned in despair. What battles, wranglings, and discussions there have been over church fronts.

THE CYNICAL GUEST—The trouble is, they don't put the façade of the cathedral in the proper place. What is the façade to represent? It is to express to Deity the thought of humanity. It is for Deity and not for man, and therefore

it ought to be, not on one side of the church, but on the top, so that it may be seen from the skies. As it is, we—poor egotists—we put the handsomest part of the cathedral toward ourselves, and turn the roofs and the ugliest part to heaven. By having the façade on the top, too, men would not find fault with it nor war about it, because they could not see it. It would not disturb nor distress anybody. We would thus shift the responsibility on the architects up in the azure realms, and let them fight it out.

THE LADY (*laughing*)—Oh, how ingenious!

THE CYNICAL GUEST—For that matter, a Gothic cathedral should be entered from underneath the ground and under the dome, so that you would get nothing but the whole sweep upward. That is really the Gothic idea. As it is now, you enter at one end, and thus get the effect of length and level—the fatalistic effect proper to the Greek temple, rather than the soaring height which is the true Christian sensation.

SOMEONE—A good scheme to get rid of the beggars at the front door.

THE CHICAGO LADY—And destroy the magnificent ceremonies at the high altar.

THE ORATOR—It's an idea that certainly should be crowned by the French Academy;

still, I'm afraid the underwriters would cancel their policies on the ground that the churches had been turned into fire-traps.

THE YOUNG LADY—Oh, they don't have big fires in Europe. We are cursed with them in America. Just think of poor Boston.

THE STUDENT—The French don't have fires in our way. They have big fires—they get them in their heads once in a while. What is a Commune but a big fire, only it burns in people's heads? The result is the same.

A CALLER (*sharing in the distribution of the black coffee*)—Why don't they have insurance companies for hot-headed people? You insure an edifice against fire—better insure us against the burning "patriot," who puts a torch to it.

SOMEONE (*ironically*)—Oh, we can't do without patriotism, and lots of it. The sentiment of patriotism is greater to-day than the sentiment of family.

THE CALLER—The love of country has largely supplanted the love of God in the last fifty years. After a while the world will learn that a "patriot" is only an office-seeker in some form. People would laugh at a man who went about proclaiming how much he loved his father or his wife, yet we think it is a fine example of

courage and honour and self-sacrifice if he goes about proclaiming how he loves his country.

THE CYNICAL GUEST—It's but a fashion—it will pass, and with it the glorious and buxom desire to trounce other races; for it's merely a wholesale and a militant disdain of the rights and sensibilities of other nations.

THE ORATOR—Well, I don't know. If you do away with the sentiment of patriotism, what are you going to give us in place of it? Universal celestialness is entirely too far off to be considered. Civilization all the way along has been built up on nothing if not the patriotic idea. The grandest points in history are those where the "national bias," as they call it, was—exaggerated, you would say. I am for progress as much as any one, yet I am frank to confess I'm a little like that old Presbyterian auntie: "No corsets—no hell—I don't know what the world's comin' to?" You take away religion, you take away the sentiment of family, you take away the sentiment of patriotism, and what is left?—Anarchy!—and that's precisely what we're getting to-day.

THE CYNICAL GUEST—I don't see it in that way. On the contrary, it seems to me that anarchism is the perfection of this so-called patriotism. The anarchists are its logical result,

for naturally they have come at length to feel that their country owes them something—a great deal—all—since its debt to the average citizen for his devotion, for his patriotism, is always emphasised in the *furore* of nationalism.

THE CALLER—To magnify the claims and virtues of your own country is to minimise those of other countries. You have only to go a step further in some brains and make this notion a more individual one—give it a personal application—and you are apt to have an anarchist who, overvaluing his claims and virtues, and consequently undervaluing those of society, thinks that his own nation or race is his debtor, and that, in the present organisation of things, he is being unjustly deprived of his dues.

THE VALET—The bicycles are ready in the court, *m'sieurs', dames.*

THE STUDENT—Ho! for Saint-Germain! An *apéritif* on the terrace at five.

At the Jardin des Plantes.

(*July* 1894.)

In the Jardin des Plantes there is a cedar of Lebanon, ten feet in circumference, with its sublime branches benignantly outspread, as if in benediction of the surroundings. It was planted here on the top of a mound in 1735 by Jussieu, who brought it from Syria. Near it is a sun-dial with the motto: "Horas non numero nisi serenas." The tree and the motto are all that I have come to care much for in this garden. They seem so calmly, grandly full of the serene past; they fill one so gratefully with the spirit of repose and of sweet dignity.

The Jardin des Plantes is far away from modern Paris, and is apparently somewhat run down at the heel. One frequents it very little. I fancy its rôle has been greater than it is to-day in the theatre at large of knowledge, for with it are associated the names of Cuvier, Buffon, Bernard, Jussieu, and others—names that have marked long strides in the progress of science.

I was invited there yesterday by a young French friend, chief of the department of ——, to dine, and to see a python kill and swallow a big rabbit. It was a private exhibition, and at four o'clock, the hour appointed, seven or eight of us grouped around the serpent's cage. Do you know what a python is? Neither did I. I mean that you have, as had I, only a vague idea that he is a large snake possessing the gift of embracing opportunities. So I resorted to the "Britannica" just before I went, in order that I might not appear wholly anchorless in the sea of science down at the Jardin. The "Britannica" informed me that the python is to the old world what the boa is to the new; consequently no pythons are to be found in the western hemisphere. There are five species of them, three native to Africa and two to Asia, all non-venomous; kill their prey by crushing it in their coils; adepts at swimming, climbing, and moving over the ground; swallow everything head first, and always have something of a disagreeable time with the feathers or horns and hair.

Well, here we were in the presence of a magnificent python. To be scientific, and therefore not to understate his dimensions, I will say that he must have been at least 15 feet long and at least 6 inches thick. I looked up at his sign, and

saw that he was of the species *Molurus*, and hence hailed from Asia. The keeper told us that he was good-natured, and never gave them any trouble. He was evidently anticipating the pleasure of a dinner, for he was curving about, and acting as if he were interested in life; and this was not surprising, since he had ingulfed nothing for six weeks! He swallows a repast once in six weeks! How the Paris *pensions* would flourish if they had such guests! His neighbour had not bolted any food for thirteen months, and yet seemed lively. The best Dr Tanner record in this museum of reptiles, however, is that of a serpent that did not stinge anything solid for thirty-three months. Then he gulped down a meal—and died the next day of indigestion!

Finally a rabbit was brought in—a huge, fat, live rabbit. The cage door was opened, and he hopped in cosily, little suspecting, poor fellow, the horrible fate in immediate store for him. The python did not see him for an instant, but no sooner had he caught sight of his victim than he darted at him like a flash, seizing him in the rear by a hip, and instantly coiling around his body. The mutilated bunny cried out pitifully for a second, until his head was smothered in a coil. Altogether, it was a heartrending exhibition that I should not wish to witness again.

In about three minutes the rabbit was dead, and the python knew it promptly. He did not wait many seconds before commencing the swallowing process. He searched for the head, experimenting with his mouth to find it. The moment he decided which end was the head, he began the act of deglutition. This was interesting, for we would have wagered that this serpent could not ingurgitate this great rabbit—clothing, boots, and all. The attendants smiled at our incredulity, saying that on one occasion this snake had swallowed a small deer. He was fifteen minutes in getting past the shoulders. I asked my friend: "How long will it take him to finish the exhibition — two or three hours?" "About twenty-five minutes," he replied, to my astonishment, for I really fancied the snake had half a day's task before him. But it appears that once he rounds the shoulders he gulps down the rest of the body in three or four huge swallows. When the hind feet disappeared down the throat of our *Molurus*, he raised his head high up and towards us, and seemed to smile in triumph over this *coup de grâce*.

The secret of his spacious capacity to swallow was clear to us when we saw the final course of the rabbit. The under part of the python is very elastic. While his upper, visible half does

not distend much, his lower half is capable of great dilatation. The mystery of his deglutitory power is then quickly understood when the shoulders of his victim vanish from view. The spectacle was not quite over, for the prey had to be shoved down to the stomach, which is located in the middle portion of the snake. So strong were his muscles that the rabbit was moved rather rapidly to his destination. The attendants threw in a woollen blanket, pushed in the python's bath tub, and he was left to be undisturbed for a month and a half.

My scientific friends called everything by its Latin name, and Latin was floating about so freely in the atmosphere that I began to rummage among my memories of six years of Virgil, Horace, and the other old Roman scientists. All that I could dust off and display on this sudden notice consisted of the first sentence of Cæsar, and of two or three common expressions that any one would know who had not wrestled with that bull-necked language of antiquity. I could not work in the Cæsar very well under the circumstances, and I endeavoured to slip in my other phrases in a jocose way like this: Coming to some animal having small horizontal stripes down his back (as if they were meant for noting memoranda), or to one having nothing apparently

but a tremendous mouth, I would ask my friend: "What is this *index rerum?*" "Where did you get that *omnium gatherum?*"

We went up to his apartment. He and his wife live in the midst of all these reptiles. There are reptiles below them and on all sides of them. Having just seen so many snakes, I was not quite at ease, and kept half glancing around to be sure that a stray serpent were not making for me with his head high in the air. To add to my secret discomfort, I chanced to pick up a journal on the salon table, and to let my eye fall on an account of a duel *d serpent* in India between a British captain and a British lieutenant. A venomous snake was put in a dark cage in a dark room. The captain entered on one side, the lieutenant on the other. Both were weaponless. They stood there, in terrible suspense and horror, waiting to be bitten. Ten minutes passed and the lieutenant gave a cry; he had been bitten. The captain, almost mad with fright, quickly made his escape. His hair had turned white. They tried to save the life of the lieutenant, but he died in an hour or two after indescribable suffering.

The special object of our little dinner I discovered was to make a match between two friends of the family. The husband had a French

chum who wished to get married, and his wife's most intimate friend wished to get married, so they had thus been brought together for the first time in cold blood, in the practical Parisian way. However, to relieve this particular occasion, I was evidently intended to serve as a buffer. The young lady was docile and timid, and conscious of being on parade. The young gentleman was as celestial as possible. Both were engaged in discreetly venturing prosaic glimpses at each other now and then, to ascertain if they were well enough pleased formally. During the evening they managed casually to compare brief notes on their preferences as to weather, and the hostess skilfully extracted from the young man his ideas about cooking, so that her companion might see how well it would go to *cuisiner* for him.

The weather and cooking are about the only topics disturbed nowadays in France during such ceremonies, for every one is republican and catholic. There remains, though, the question of *dot.* I heard my friend saying to his friend: "Well, don't you think she is amiable? She is so *gentille,* and has a *dot* of 25,000 francs—a pretty good sum for these times." And the other seemed about ready to respond: "I'll meditate over it, and decide in a day or two."

This is, you know, the typical manner in which

it is done in France. You may remark: "Oh, how materialistic and ridiculous! No courtship, no being alone together, no days of blissful uncertainty, no sleepless nights, no boat-rides, no bonbons, no Chopin, no rushing of hearts together in a *loge* over 'Du lieber Schwan.'" Our French host would respond: "Yes, yet think of the time and bank bills saved! The money I would have wasted on drives and theatres to make Marie believe I was prosperous, she and I have put into our home, and enjoy it day after day. No lovers' quarrels on our plan, no dreadful waitings, no broken hearts, no dog after your boot-leg over her father's terraces, no love-letters to be brought up before you in court!"

The windows of the salon looked down on a small ponded inclosure where fourteen big and little crocodiles were energetically at work doing nothing. It was proposed that we should go down and make them laugh. Do you know the difference between an alligator and a crocodile? Neither did I. Still, it is not a difficult question. To speak broadly, an alligator appears to be a crocodile whose snout got stepped on in the rush and sputter of the sixth day. When we reached the pond, there were four or five big fellows, ten feet long, lying on the ground. We punched them in the sides, shook

hands with them, tickled them under their chins, and jerked them by their tails. The animals merely made little hissing noises, and good-humouredly fluted the white ivory outlines of colossal smiles.

For my part, I was both amazed and delighted at this mute crocodile jocularity. I had never dreamed of finding these animals so jovial and gamesome, and I asked my friend: "But how about those famous crocodile tears?" The scientific reply is something like this. "There is a basis of truth for that old fiction—at least, if one refers to snakes. It is now known that the eye of the serpent is protected from dust and danger by transparent eyelids, so that he goes about with them closed. There is, therefore, no dust on the surface of his eyes, and no need of tears to wash them off. Nevertheless, the tear-gland is not reduced in size; on the contrary, it is unusually large—often three times larger than the whole eye. The explanation of this is that the tear-gland has lost its connection with the eye, and opens through the tear canal into the mouth, thus adding to the huge supply of secretions required whenever the snake swallows game. Hence one may say that a reptile sheds—pours—tears over his victim, but they are false tears, put to a very material use."

After a while we heaved the crocodiles into the pond, and went into the turtle lot to kick over the turtles. With one of them, however, we did not make great headway, for he weighed four hundred pounds, and was half as big as a dining-table. Then it came time to go, and the young lady was confided to my care, much to my surprise, because I had never seen the French rule broken, namely, young unmarried women must be chaperoned as late as sixty years. I was highly gratified at this display of confidence; still, in thinking about it to-day, I conclude the real reason was simply that the young lady lived an hour and a half away by omnibus, and my sensible Parisian friend and his wife did not wish to travel so far last night.

The Decline of the Boulevard des Italiens.

(*December* 1893.)

THE boulevard that runs from the Place de l'Opéra to the Rue Richelieu still seems nearest the centre of the French world. It may be designated as the Boulevard des Italiens. The Rue de la Paix is only the shopping street of Paris. Its fame is in its dresses and its jewelry. Worth and Doucet are there side by side, the former furnishing better stuffs, and the latter displaying more style, more *chic*, and therefore having a larger Parisian trade than his rival.

Around the Boulevard des Italiens, by contrast, are grouped many great characteristic institutions and associations. The *Temps* is here with its cold bosom and admirably enlightened seriousness. Its office is plain, lean, and frigid. Its windows are decorated with maps for the edification of the passer-by. Now it is a map of Cochin-China, and then it is a chart of Afric's wastes. Usually there is also a

THE DECLINE OF THE BOULEVARD DES ITALIENS.

military diagram showing the fortifications, or armed forces, in certain regions of France, Italy or Germany.

There are one or two other leading journals on the street, and a few steps away are found several newspaper homes. Among them are the *Gaulois* and the *Figaro*. The *Figaro* building has a very artistic and ornate façade, embellished with a statue representing the immortal Figaro of Beaumarchais. On one side of the entry is inscribed the line: "Without the liberty to censure there is no eulogium that flatters. Only little men fear little paragraphs." On the other side are traced the oft-quoted words of Figaro: "Praised by some, blamed by others, mocking the fools and braving the wicked, I make haste to laugh at everything—for fear of having to weep."

The Boulevard des Italiens is well provided with theatres and souvenirs of theatres. There are the Opéra, the Vaudeville, the Nouveautés, the plot of ground where the Opéra Comique stood, and the site of the old Grand Opéra. In the vicinity are the Variétés, the Bouffes Parisiens, the Palais Royal, the Gymnase, the Conservatoire, and also the square of the old Théâtre Italien, which filled such a corner in the glory of Paris from 1841 to 1870.

The celebrated banking lane, known as Rue Laffitte, branches off this boulevard, and in it is the Rothschild institution of Paris. Back of the Rothschild bank there is a large empty space well walled up. People who pass along the wall are apt to rap it with their knuckles. This will bring good luck they say. Rue Laffitte is named after the banker of whom the pin story of France is told. Every country has a tale about a millionaire and a pin. Laffitte, then a poor young man, applied without success at a banker's for a position. As he went out through the open court in his disappointment, he saw a pin, carefully picked it up, and filed it away under his lapel. The banker chanced to observe this evidence of banking capacity, had him called back, offered him a clerkship, and in due time gave him his daughter, the bank, and everything that young Laffitte deigned to ask for, under the influence of the pin's charm.

Although every race has its Laffitte, and his biography is essentially the same, the French Laffitte distinguished himself in one way. Whenever he indulged in a Vatel dinner on the Normandy coast, the fish came from Chevet's in Paris, that he might be sure they were fresh and edible. This was rather severe on the sea towns of north-western France, but then the sea has

never figured much with the French in any fashion. It has never entered into the soul of the nation as in England and Holland.

One of the streets parallel to Rue Laffitte is Rue du Helder, where resided one of Père Goriot's daughters, you remember. And near by is the Rue Le Peletier where Orsini attempted to assassinate Napoleon III. The Rue Le Peletier and the Rue Laffitte are well known for their picture shops. For that matter, all these streets are familiar to the connoisseurs of French painting.

Across the way from the Vaudeville is the house where Rossini lived and died. Here, divinely lazy and gormand, he cooked his own *plats* and regaled himself with macaroni and *bonsmots*—a mixture, as he was called, of Punchinello and Olympian Jove. He gave "Guillaume Tell" to the world in 1829, and during thirty-nine years thereafter, and until his death, he revelled in a fat and greasy indolence. "William Tell" was the first, and remains one of the greatest, of the Romantic operas produced in France. I happened, only the other day, to be reading, in the private *foyer* of the Opéra, the poster of its initial performance. It ran like this: "First representation of William Tell. By Giacomo Rossini. Monday, April 3rd, 1829. All the seats being taken, the bureaux will not

be open. Dance: Mlles. Noblet, Legallois, Montessu, Taglioni. Singers: Messieurs, etc.; Mesdames, etc. Begin at 7."

Switzerland is embalmed in this opera, and this is why it yet lives. Its inspired overture is in the repertory of all orchestras and bands. If one is idling about the Rossini house of a summer evening, he will likely hear a melody piped in the souvenir of the *ranz des vaches*, and the land of the legendary Tell will rise before his mental vision as a fine Swiss mountaineer saunters by with three black goats. He is whistling a Canton air to tell people that night is falling, and that it is time to buy goats' milk. I have tried once or twice to follow him home, curious to see if he had a chalet, full of straw and tin cans, tucked away in the middle of Paris; but he always keeps strolling on, and the goats know the streets like their owner's pocket.

Another noted man, a neighbour of Rossini, lived on a corner of the Boulevard des Italiens—Louis Blanc. He had apartments over Tortoni's, and every morning came downstairs there for his coffee.

The characteristic feature of this boulevard has been the café, for here are the Café Anglais, the Café Riche, and the Maison Dorée. Here,

too, was Tortoni's, for it nailed up its door last summer because its customers had grown so few. It was long renowned, especially under the Second Empire, for its ices, and for the witty fraternity of journalists, *litterateurs*, and artists who haunted its historic *perron* of three steps, and its gilded little rooms. In later times, its most faithful *habitué* was Aurélien Scholl, the popular Paris journalist and wit. It is said that he brushed away a furtive tear last June when the café closed. In commenting on its history, he remarked: "The proprietor retires with no reproaches to fate. He defended butter against oleomargarine, beef *consommé* against Liebig's Extract, early fruits against preserves, wine against beer, cognac against rectified alcohol, but the contest had become hopeless. The most absurd aperients persisted in disputing with each other for the favour of a *blasé* public."

Here the note is struck. The French café is a doomed institution. The Boulevard des Italiens and the traditional white and gold café were in the height of their glory under Napoleon III., and have since been in a decline. In a few years the boulevard that extends from the Opéra to the Madeleine will be the heart of the capital. Paris has ever been moving west from the Bastille to the Bois. The famous companions of

Tortoni will give up the struggle or be transformed into *brasseries* before long, for the *brasserie* is becoming the king of the boulevards, and German beer is triumphing over French wine.[1]

We recall the Teutonic prophecy of Gautier delivered before 1870 in a droll mood. The incident is one of the most amusing in French biographical literature. Marc-Monnier related it as follows in the *Journal des Débats*, in 1883: "As for M. Théophile Gautier, on whom I thought it my duty to call, I found him stretched out on a divan, a Greek cap on his head, and three cats on his abdomen. As he made no movement on my entering, I asked if I were disturbing his meditations. 'Not at all,' he said; 'I only work Sundays at the printing office! Sit down if you wish—if you prefer to stand, do just as you do at home.' Having thus put myself at my ease, the poet of 'Albertus' did not inquire who I was, but talked the whole time, firing off thoughts of all colours. The three cats, which he did not cease to caress, accompanied him with a purring almost monastic. He talked of everything, and of a 'little more

[1] Since this was written, the Café Riche has been turned into a palatial *brasserie*, and Bignon's has closed its doors.

than everything'—this was one of his *mots*—above all, of the despicable business (chien de métier) he was forced to follow—to make copy for the *bourgeois!* A *feuilleton* every eight days about absurd plays and pieces! And this was necessary in order to live! They paid him more for an ell of buckram than for a handful of gems!

"In his first youth (he was only in his third) he had been obliged to draw up prospectuses; it was in this way that he had learned French. A man who has never drawn a prospectus will never know how to spell. For that matter, what is the use of writing? Racine only succeeded in composing one fine line:—

'La fille de Minos et de Pasiphaé.'

There has never been but one poet in France—Victor Hugo. Have you read 'Les Châtiments'? It is full of inexact things, but it is of such a phosphorescence that in nineteen centuries there will remain nothing else of all the reign of my emperor. *Voild* posterity, my good man! Tacitus was probably a poor devil to whom Nero refused the equivalent of a *bureau de tabac.* This is why Tacitus made copy and Nero was a monster. It is the writers who create events; nothing has ever come to pass in the world. For that matter, in nineteen centuries there will

only be Germans; but, when there shall only be Germans, they will become so bored that they will offer a premium to those who will fabricate 'Latins.' For the moment, there is only Hugo —and Baudelaire: *Les Fleurs du Mal*, ferociously piebald and spotted, of a purple resembling congealed blood, or of a chlorotic white, exhaling acrid, penetrating, vertiginous perfumes."

The café is associated with the royal and imperial glory of France, and to see it going out of existence accentuates the feeling of the traveller who visits Versailles and St Cloud, and leaves France with a gentle yet persistent impression that the land of the Parisians is in a mild state of decadence. Of course French art and fashions will reign supreme, and the French will always teach nations taste, delicacy, lucidity. It would be a heavy world, indeed, were the French to be taken out of it. An ancient Greek would surely choose to be a Gaul if he were to be born into our modern world and had a choice of race.

But remark the decline in our day of the many things that have borne the mark of French distinction. There is the decline in the art of international diplomacy, for instance, and in the French custom of effacing girls into the background, by calling them all Marie, and having

them wear cotton in their ears, so that you cannot individualise them any more than you can pease. In the domain of practical sciences, where the next great future for civilisation seems to lie, the French are, and will ever be, hopelessly behind. Trade, colonisation, and electricity are not to their liking. France manufactures what the most civilised people want in their refinement and effeminacy, and not what new races need, so that French colonial territories are for display, and not for the necessities of secular and racial expansion.

The decadence of France will scarcely be noticeable. A very wealthy people in an exceedingly fertile land, and with the capacity to provide so much that other leading nations desire, the more they advance in the scale of artistic and polished progress, the French will visibly hold their own for a long time. Their national debt is immense and increasing materially. The present tremendous drain of men, money, and time, for the sake of national glory, must tell on the race as the decades go on. However, under the sweet cheer of a promised revenge, they apparently mean to persist in this course at all cost, and feel that they have had sufficient woe without being called on to give up the armed thought of getting back Alsace and Lorraine—

in other words, without abandoning their taste for destruction. They are something like the Arkansaw man who is reported in the New York *Nation* to have announced: "God knows I've had trouble enough without putting water in my whisky."

PARIS DAYS AT DIEPPE.

Paris Days at Dieppe.

(*September* 1893.)

DIEPPE, in summer, is the Boulevard des Italiens extended to the coast. You come here to keep in Paris rather than for a strand and the sea. The town, with its theatre trod by the Coquelins, Galipaux, and other favourites of the metropolitan boards, and with its arrivals and news hot from the boulevards of the capital every hour, is only, in so far as it is a festival resort, a kind of brackish microcosm of the capital.

To paraphrase a saying of Alphonse Karr, whose memory mixes its Attic flavour with the brine of the Normandy coast: "At Dieppe, one does not like to bathe, but one likes to have bathed." This beach would never caress the sentimentality of a Madame Bovary. Nothing could well be more disagreeable to a romantic soul, strung up in high despair, than to drown unnoticed amid all this littoral commonplaceness.

And still it was at Dieppe that the Duchess of Perry, whose Neapolitan blood was ever burning

through her veins, first sketched and disported the fashion of the surf in France, and thus enabled the home of Ango and Duquesne to reassume something of its ancient prestige and glory. The Duchess passed her summers here from 1824 to 1829. The print of the footstep of her little daughter, the Duchess of Parma, has been carefully preserved *in situ* on the Tortoni-like *perron* of the ducal mansion, and is affectionately pointed out to the visitor by the Dieppois. One can barely decipher the inscription: "Son premier pas est pour Dieppe et pour Dieppe un bienfait. Mademoiselle ——le 4 Septembre 1827" (Her first step is for Dieppe, and for Dieppe a benefit).

Are the English, who surge across here in the season, attracted by the spectacle of the French rehearsing, as it were, the novelty of the bath? For the French do not appear to be great washers of themselves. A typical Parisian does not reckon balneation among the irresistible joys and luxuries of life. He accepts and undergoes it because it is a civilised custom. People who are brought up in the Parisian boarding-schools and convents, where it is always announced with native complacency that a foot bath ("petit bain") is afforded every fortnight, and a complete bath ("grand

bain") every month, do not claim to exploit the cult of the bath to any noteworthy extent. The Greeks seem to have bequeathed their gift of light to the French and their habits of immersion to the English. The latter have fallen lot to the sombre colourings of mediævalism, and the former to its unwashedness. A Parisian has the traditional Roman Catholic preference for incense and perfumes, and therefore for powder-puffs, rather than for water and soap.

Some such hint of a thought is outlined in one's mind as he idles along the white meagreness of the cliffs here at Dieppe, and muses over its modest panorama. One remarks how the town divides into two parts. There is the *plage*, flanked on one side by the stately row of white-faced hotels, and bordered on the other by the fringing waves. Then back of this is shoaled the small dull-coloured city itself, with vague memories of Italy in its vile arcades, and of Holland in a general way. Here the smell of fish stenches one's reveries, and seasick odours loaf about the street corners and attempt familiarities with weak stomachs. The only pleasure in Dieppe proper is St Jacques, dressed up in its hoary laceries of stone hewn after the most daring delicacies of Gothic patterns.

Over the hill is Puys, sporting its tiny jewel of

a beach. Its two miniature heights are crowned respectively with Lord Salisbury's villa and with the formidable embarkments and strange remains of some unknown "gallo-romain" camp, which mutely persists in defending its secrets from layman and archæologist alike. Puys is known of the two Dumas. Fortunate did the lady consider herself who found the elder Dumas corked down long enough there to favour her album with some appropriate inscription like the following: "To embark on your career with a woman is to embark with a tempest, in which, however, she is the lifeboat."

The centre and circumference of summer existence at Dieppe is the Casino, which furnishes the quotidian "events," and offers everything in the manner of entertainment that its guests can demand. There are many children on the beach who are fittingly rejoiced with Punch and Judy, feats of prestidigitation, and fireworks. An ambitious orchestra, conducted with more of the impetuosity of the Strausses than one is wont to see displayed in French band-masters, gives daily a round of inviting concerts. The performers love the flowery music of Ambroise Thomas, and delight the older Parisians with the faded sweetnesses of Auber. It is charming, late in the afternoons,

to watch the diligent French mammas embroidering the dusk of Massenet's "Crépuscule" into their fancy-work as the twilight begins to steal in on the musicians. Every other night there is a ball, where deliciously-toiletted couples fan past you as they trace the airy circles of the waltz. The weather is still too warm to think of lacing up these evening parties in the corsets of cotillions.

As one lies stretched out up here over it all on this sunny cliff, he can read, in the light of local interest, the amusing pages of the fumbling Jules Janin, with their memories of the renowned people who haunted, in other days, the vicinity of this minute wrinkle in the earth. He used to see a man tragically approaching the edge of the waves down there—an unfortunate soul, who had the air of saying: "Must I then precipitate myself into this cold and filthy abyss?" It was Meyerbeer—Music in person—who had come to take, tremblingly, some sea baths. He thus sought a strange cure for the saddest of maladies—the malady which one believes he has, but which, *grace à Dieu*, he has not.

And Janin used to remark another figure walking in silence along the beach yonder, with his head bare—the most beautiful head in the world since Byron was no more—with his large,

black, fiery eyes sweeping the wide stretch of the ocean, with his hair, curly and whitening, flying about his shoulders—the greatest genius in France—Chateaubriand! For here, in some hostelry, Madame Récamier had improvised a summer salon. That which a *femme du monde* does for her chamber in an inn, Madame Récamier did for her salon in an inn. M. Ballanche and M. de Chateaubriand, at a certain hour each day, disposed of themselves in it; Madame Récamier arranged herself as best she could on the hard sofa of Utrecht velvet, the *book* was preciously drawn from its little box, and the reading of the "Memoires of M. de Chateaubriand" recommenced.

Jules Janin was not wholly happy at Dieppe, and this was his complaint: "What saddens all these places which the sea bathes is a race apart of English voyagers, who are indeed the saddest men in this world—both the most bored and the most tedious; nomatic race, having no country, and peddling its opulent misery from Florence to Paris, from Paris to St Petersburg; pale Britons, who go everywhere, who repose everywhere, who eat and sleep everywhere, but in England! An Englishman in London is an intelligent being, active, occupied, laborious; but Englishmen in France—the English at a sea resort—Oh! the

sad and lamentable figures! They arrive here in their oldest clothes, and with the most disdainful of physiognomies. To see them hitched one to the other, one would say they were a flock of sheep, badly washed and badly combed.

"As soon as they reach a town, they seize possession of it, they are the masters of it, the town is theirs, there is no place for anyone. They talk loudly in their impossible language, and are allowed to go in troops with their tall, dried-up and yellow wives. Within the walls of the city of Dieppe a citizen of Dieppe is a rare curiosity. When the bathing season comes, every proprietor of a good home here puts an English sign on his door, announcing to the passer-by that his home is for rent. He cedes everything to the first comer, provided the first comer is English. The moment the house is full the proprietor disappears, one does not know where—divinity present, it is true, yet invisible; who sees everything and whom no one sees; who understands English at least as well as French, and who speaks neither one nor the other.

"But what joy when, in the midst of this inhabited desert, you meet a man of your daily life, or a pretty and amiable *Française* of Paris! Then you realise that there are people in the world who are not vagabonds from England

. . . In this manner at Dieppe we French have placed altar over against altar, and extolled France as against England, gaiety and good humour as against *ennui* and melancholy, *vin de champagne* as against cider—'et vive la joie!'"

Should we have said that was written some fifty years ago and not yesterday? . . . Thus, we listen on our cliff to the eternal roar of the sea, and to the eternal roar of race hatred.

Parisian Family Life by Contrast.

I VENTURE to intercalate, among these Lutetian sketches, the following outline of my brief glimpses of Dutch interiors, with the excuse that it may suggest, by contrast, characteristics of the Parisian *foyer*.

(AMSTERDAM, *November* 1893.)

We had never been in Holland in winter, and were hoping to find, instead of this melting April weather, some of those picturesque ice-scapes and skating scenes which Koekkoek and Schelfhout loved to paint with such wonderful feeling for ice. But we regret to learn here that all that Dutch era of marketing and merry-making by the peasantry on skates is wholly past.

Our notice this time has thus been turned especially to interiors, and we have been happy in viewing Dutch domesticity in two or three of the best families in Amsterdam. Love for the home keeps tormenting the average American who lives in Paris until he has succeeded in a

measure in supplanting it by the French fondness for theatres, cafés, and the streets. The relative lack of chimney-corner welcome in France for the stranger—the *vie fermée* of the Parisian family—is perhaps not emphasised often enough. The French who are real French, and not a mixture of some other race, take merely a sort of salon, or *pension*, interest in you; that is to say, no personal interest. The hospitality one receives at the hands of Parisian acquaintances and friends is, comparatively speaking, that of being gracefully left uninvited and freely alone to one's self. It is a fashion which, after all, has its decided charms and advantages, and appears to harmonise with the delightful French cult of politeness.

It requires only a short sojourn in Amsterdam to enjoy something of that cosy, open-armed, warm-hearted Netherland hospitality, which makes Parisian family life look to us rather thin and poor. Possibly our experiences here may seem worth the recounting. We have come to see some Amsterdam gentlemen on business. Among them is an erudite and acknowledged leader in the Dutch Calvinist church. He at once invited us to dine at his home on the approaching Sunday evening, and we were more than pleased at this opportunity of observing

with our own eyes the manner in which the Calvinist Sabbath in Holland differs from that of the cheerless and rigid Puritan, and from the gay and chilled type of day which haunts the French *cheminée*. The first thing that struck our notice, after having been presented in this domestic circle on the evening in question, was the number of offspring. There were four boys and three girls. The eldest of them, a daughter, was about twenty years old. All of them were lively, good-humoured, and more or less buxom. They were blessed with the beautiful Dutch complexions — clear skins, red cheeks. We have since learned that large families here are the rule among the better classes. One of our acquaintances, a millionaire, has had seventeen children.

English was spoken by all the members of the household with considerable fluency, and the conversation was carried on in our tongue. We at once felt at home. The presence of strangers in their midst did not seem for an instant to alter the nature of the hearthstone intercourse. We sat down at dinner. A prayer was offered. During the repast everyone was very talkative and at ease, as if at his own fireside. The young people in particular were disposed to get up and wait on themselves, instead of asking the servant

to serve them. But there was one thing which we remarked with a genuine, if somewhat strange, warmth of comfort. It was the frank and abundant evidences of spontaneous affection that were displayed among the family. One of the boys, coming near his father in quest of something, snatched the pleasure of kissing him; and the mother also, having had occasion to whisper to her husband, took the opportunity of kissing him on the cheek. After dessert, and while we were still at table, one of the daughters distributed hymn-books, sat down at the organ, and led in a religious service. The father read a psalm and offered another prayer.

On quitting the dining-room he showed us up to his library, and we talked over some matters of business. We should not have expected that business would have thus been made an outright theme of discussion in a Dutch Calvinist home on Sunday; yet we find that the Calvinist gentlemen here are quite free to call on each other on the Sabbath in order to discuss secular prospects and sketch commercial enterprises.

After an hour or so we went downstairs for refreshments. Tea, coffee, claret, and cakes were passed. The family were assembled in a most hospitable and household-like way. English and American literature became the subject of con-

versation. They were fond of Scott, had not read Thackeray, and said that they could not appreciate the types of character and humour of Dickens. George Eliot was much admired. They were about equally divided as to whether "Adam Bede" or the "Mill on the Floss" should be placed at the head of the list of her works. "Jane Eyre" was familiar to them. The young people had been deeply interested in "Robert Elsmere." No remark was made about its religious bearing further than that the mother at length observed that she did not see how its attitude could be regarded with satisfaction. It was clear that "John Halifax, Gentleman," best suited their tastes, and came nearest their ideal of a novel. They seemed to have heard nothing of Poe and Irving, but knew of Cooper and Mark Twain, and loved Longfellow. The mother quoted a stanza of "Tell me not in mournful numbers."

Meanwhile the youngest members of the household were occupied in romping about and having a good-natured time. One of the boys was engaged in making osculatory excursions among his sisters, much to their amiable distress. Finally one of the girls outlined her impatience by threatening him with a cuff on the ear, exclaiming: "Let me alone, won't you, please? You

are altogether too — too" — and she fluttered about for the correct word in her English vocabulary, at last alighting on — "kissy." Whereupon the father spoke up: "No, that is not right. What is the word?" addressing the question to us. We began grubbing among the roots of our composite language-plant, while temporarily submitting "osculatory." "Oh yes," he responded; "*osculatio*—Latin—that is so." "Still," we said, "that is hardly the term for this particular instance." "Well," he asked, "*fond of kissing;* how will that do?" So we let it go at that.

During the evening an old friend of the household joined the group—a professor in a Dutch university. To judge from his appearance, one would have thought him thoroughly dried up with erudition; but he proved as juicy and as jovial as the rest. His beer-drinking and wine-sipping, his smoking and talking, all appeared to mix harmoniously. One of the daughters at length concluded to retire, and kissed each one of the family. When she arrived at the professor on her tour of good-night salutations, she would not accord him the same favour. He commenced to complain of her discrimination, and to set up his rights to the osculatory attention which it seemed she had always bestowed

on him. In spite of his arguments and appeals, she held her ground, claiming that his breath smelt of tobacco. A general discussion ensued about the tobacco habit, for the Netherlanders are the most inveterate of smokers, in that they ever keep vigorously puffing instead of idling at it. Some of those present attacked the use of tobacco; others defended it. The eldest daughter proved its most decided enemy. As the result of it all, the professor was left unkissed. Toward half-past nine o'clock the father excused himself, saying that he must do some work, but he begged us not to hurry. As no one else was quitting the circle, we were happy to remain, and did not come away until after eleven.

The great pleasure of this Sunday evening scene lay in our realising how something of the jolly, cosy home life of the old *genre* painters of Holland was being unconsciously interpreted for us by a cultivated household. There was certainly as little of Edinburgh Puritanism about this Sabbath as any seventeenth-century Dutch canvas can well picture.

This notable exuberance of animal spirits in the Dutch, their non-French ways of bountifully expressing family love by snug kisses and hugs, would seem to go with much eating and drinking; and this impression appears con-

firmed when, at *café au lait* in our hotel of mornings, curiosity induces us to sample eight kinds of breads. And of course cheeses abound, especially a variety which looks, smells, and tastes like new calico. Do the Hollanders, one asks himself, take bits of their dull foggy weather, and whiffs of the heavy seasick odours that lie in their streets and hotel corridors, and fabricate them into these "coagulated decays," as M. Vacquerie would call them in disgust? For one wonders about the composition of these strange Dutch cheeses, as he tosses through the hours of the night, after having greeted some of them too vigorously for the first time, and tries to revel in the celestial chimes that every fifteen minutes clash loftily across the darkness from the heights of the Dam. We are not prepared, however, to affirm that the Hollanders are exceptionally great eaters, since the dinners to which we have been invited here, and where Amsterdam guests were present, have surprised us by their modesty of girth, and have made us think of the contrast offered by the conventional Parisian repast with its numerous courses.

This matter of eating calls to mind that salt and pepper colours are on every hand here, not only in exterior but in interior effects.

Carpets, curtains, tapestries and wall-paper are usually of this homely, comfortable hue, even in parlours; while in French houses, the *distingué* and chilly salon styles of furniture and furnishings often pervade the kitchen. Take that costly race monument—the Ryks Museum. Its façade, its mosaic floors, its ornamentations are of a general salt and pepper tone, and confirm this as the national colour of this country of firesides. The hue finds unique expression in rag carpets. They are seen everywhere here, yet never, I think, in France. In a villa in Hilversum we remarked the same coloured kind of rug carpets and plain wall-paper that used to adorn our old farm home in the Genesee valley twenty-five years ago. We have nowhere surveyed residences in Europe which so closely resemble, externally, typical New England and New York state dwellings as those at The Hague.

The Hollanders are contented with the fact that their life is around the hearthstone. "We are such sleepy people," said to us a young lady, whose father is one of the commanders in the Dutch army. "Even the coming of the royal family does not wake us up. At The Hague they make a great fuss over the court, but the Amsterdam ladies are very indolent about

calling on the Queen Regent while she sojourns here. They do not like to give themselves the bother; they are so fond of staying at home!"

Whatever exists on a miniature scale in Holland—and there necessarily must be much—is fittingly personified in our generation by the little Queen. The Dutch love her dearly, and you experience something of the charm of this unrepublican idea when, in passing the long, white-faced Château of Soestdyk, on a fine June day, you lift your hat in honour of a girlish figure which you see flitting back and forth by some open window, and a small royal arm promptly waves its salutations at you. Yet the sentiment in the Netherlands in favour of a republican form of government has become so strong, we are told by the editor of one of the daily papers of Rotterdam, that were the Queen to die, or to choose an unpopular consort, a republic would certainly result. The success of French democracy and the recent events in Belgium have their full effect on the Dutch.

The Amsterdam people are sure to ask you if you have seen the so-called "Night Watch." The Calvinist claims Rembrandt. He translates Rembrandtism into Calvinism, in that they both make the home the centre and temple of

Christian life, and do not keep it within the precinct and paling of cathedral and church as does even Rubens; and also in that, while they have little esteem for the nude, they put emphasis on the *clothed* body—the whole clothed body from head to foot—and give an unequalled value to heaven's evangelical sunlight, and, by contrast, to mysterious, God-hovering depths of black backgrounds. The Hollanders seem to have felt and expressed in painting, more beautifully and profoundly than any other race, the manner in which the nourishing gleams of a solid, comfortable, trust-in-Providence life may pour through the dark, the eclipsed, realms of the soul. The "Night Watch" would appear then to be, in a way, Calvinism in colours, and the Sabbath home circle of which we have spoken above illustrates how, in the Dutch Calvinism, the devotion to a sombre religion is lighted up by the rays of the love of a hearty, world-contented daily existence.

We are haunted by the remorseful souvenir of having slightly wounded the susceptibilities of a memorable Amsterdam family by carelessly remarking at breakfast that the superb and exhaustless miracle of the Dutch era of painting may be partly explained by the fact that Holland sacrificed, in effect, the other arts for

that one. "Poor abused Holland! Why, we have had great poets—Vondel—Bilderdyk—Jacob Cats — Huyghens — Revius," pleaded a pink-and-pearl-cheeked daughter of the house, in a hurt voice, from across the table.

Mourning for President Carnot.

LAST Monday morning the young Parisian woman who serves my coffee came in as usual, and among her matutinal salutations happened to remark nonchalantly that the President had been assassinated. I supposed she was jesting, and when she finally produced the morning journal to prove that it was not a pleasantry on her part, I was so visibly impressed with the tragic event, that she half naïvely, half banteringly, asked if I were a relative of M. Carnot.

I wound my way along the boulevards about three o'clock in the afternoon, curious to behold how those exhilarating precincts looked in the shadow of a national grief. Scarcely an evidence of mourning was to be perceived in all that great centre of Paris. There were the same lively streams of people that one observes every day in the year; the shops were open; the Bourse was as noisy as ever. The only variations in this scene were that the men at the cafés held black-bordered newspapers in

their hands, and that a small draped flag hung inconspicuously out of the office of the *Temps.* The general display of indifference was something of a shock to me. I chanced to meet two emotional American friends who had been scouring the metropolis to see it prostrate under this sudden blow, and their disappointed—in truth, disgusted—reports confirmed my observations. There was no sign of a solemn hush on the air, on faces, on the wonted activity. While the world was imagining how the pall of death must have been thrown over the French capital, the Parisians seemed to be taking the catastrophe little more seriously than the insignificant fall of some ministry.

The next day, when the telegrams of condolence began to arrive, and when the awe-stricken expressions of sympathy from the foreign press began to be quoted, the citizens of Paris commenced to furl and crape a flag here and there. It is Friday, and the State funeral will occur on Sunday, but the city is as yet very lightly, meagrely, draped. The public is neither spontaneous nor overwhelming in its manifestations of grief. My coffee-maid had correctly personified its attitude. A gentle *insouciance* has been, on the whole, the keynote of the week.

Why is this? Because, for one thing, the character and rôle of the immaculate Carnot were effaced. Unlike Lincoln and Garfield, he is associated with no movement, struggle, or event dear to the popular heart.

And then the Parisians do not mourn in our manner. They are not, as a race, so rapidly and profoundly disturbed as we are by dolorous occurrences, and do not yield so profusely to sad emotions. Their disposition for and cult of gaiety make them quicker than we to seize the blithe and elated aspects of affairs, and to strain the fun out of serious matters. By the limitations of this trait, they are less speedily and freely moved by misfortune: they are less prompt to take an infelicity keenly, and to realise all that it means.

One reason why the French, as a race or as individuals, do not manifest openly a tribulation as much as Americans, is that something of the traditional influence of the old court life is disseminated among them. They act more as people who are in the circles of a court and always before the eyes of strangers—of the curious. Thus they observe a certain etiquette and restriction in the display of woe. We have more of the habits that come from being much in our homes. We are more disposed to act in

public as in private, and to give more overflowing, and therefore more *homely*, testimony of our moods and seasons of despair.

I have frequently thought that the Parisians mourn by *colour* rather than by *form*. As to the shape of things, cheerfulness and pleasantness are ever suggested in France as the result of the *allegresse* and sweetness of the general temperament. So full are the French of the joyous note, that they strike one as having no very racial, national, or individualistic fashion in *form* in their expression of disconsolateness, as they have in their expressions of light-heartedness. Their mortuary traditions may be traced directly to old Italy. The crape-wound gas-jets, burning in the blazing white mid-day all around the Elysée Palace, where President Carnot's body lies, somehow recall to one scenes of death in Naples.

Or, if the French can be said to have mourning *forms* of their own, then these *forms* are comparatively gay. Take the style of the toilets of bereaved Parisian ladies. The hue is black, but the outlines, instead of flowing narrowly and humbly down in sorrow, mount engagingly up and out, and are often vivacious and coquettish precisely as in the non-mourning garbs. The Parisian widow, by the pattern of her dress and

turn of her bonnet, is almost invariably represented as if courting a conquest rather than as overcome with grief for the departed one. There is only the black colour to make known her affliction.

LETTERS AND COLOURS.

THE ACADEMY.

The Academy.

(*January* 1894.)

For the lover of modern literature there is no feast of eye so rich and ample as that offered at a public sitting of the French Academy. To study the faces of the Immortals for two or three hours, and to gaze at the representatives of French culture who are assembled to do them auditory honour, bring forcibly to one's mind the fact that such official occasions are unique in the history of letters. Of course many of these mortals and Immortals are not by any means distinguished. Fame has never lost her bonnet

in chasing after some of them. But here are habitually found together a far greater number of celebrated literary people than in any other spot in the world.

This afternoon M. Challemel-Lacour is being received to fill the *fauteuil* of Renan. Who is M. Challemel-Lacour? He is merely President of the French Senate, an institution as decorative and undemonstrative as a museum of porcelain jugs. The rarer the vase, the less its utility.

One finds difficulty in putting names to faces as he beholds the immortals. Only those does he recognise whose photographs are freely displayed about town. The venerable Jules Simon is remarked at once — an amiable, smiling countenance, notwithstanding its eighty years. Sardou, who is sitting just back of him, is a slight man, not tall. His hair is black, and his shaven face is very mobile—an actor's face. His clothes look somewhat worn and rusty. He nods quickly and good-humouredly when he sees an acquaintance in the audience. He is wealthy, and lives in summer in a magnificent villa on the crown of the highest hill at Marly. One glances through the lofty iron gates at the Egyptian sphinxes that watch the entrance to his grounds. The view from his aërial perch is

fine. Far away and down below lies Paris in its nest. The whole panorama, on August days, swims in a delicate blue haze that skirts the long lines of distant hills. A few steps from Sardou's villa is the summer place of Dumas—a modest house on the street. The two greatest living French play-writers dwell here side by side, and are the best of friends.

None of the Immortals, to judge from their guise this afternoon, give much attention to their habiliments. Their garments are sensibly commonplace and unnoticeable. Sully Prudhomme, who is the chief attraction in certain Paris salons, and is reputed to have broken, in spite of himself, more than one choice heart —even he is dressed somewhat carelessly, as if he found it a bore to be dragged out to the Institute. He is, to use the term in its essential French signification, the most *distingué* of these renowned men.

Right in front of him is M. de Vogüé, also one of the estimable figures in contemporary French literature. No one, they say, handles French prose better than he. His face is of a distinct Slav type—a dark skin, a bushy beard, and something vague and remote in his look. The Duc de Broglie and the Duc d'Aumale are present. The latter seems a very old man, with

sunken eyes and a gray moustache and goatee. There is a vacancy in his regard. On the last row is Pierre Loti. He is a fragile person, with large gazelle eyes, and haunted with a timid air, as if he expected to be frightened into flight every moment.

All the Immortals are not here, for we should quickly recognise Dumas, Pasteur, Coppée, Claretie, Pailleron, with his dainty feminine ways; Emile Ollivier, with his giddy manner and elevated steps; Freycinet, with his diminutive figure and homely bearing; Meilhac, with his twinkling eyes, polished head, and round back; Leconte de Lisle, whose appearance suggests one of those sleek and massive bulls which he is so fond of making bellow across his verse. Perhaps Coppée remained at home today, so that his washerwoman would not have to leave him another line, saying, "Je suis Vénus avec le linge." On one occasion, he informs us, she left him this unconscious octameter to tell him that she had come with his linen, but she fell into difficulties with her orthography—"I am Venus with the linen."

The first time I ever looked down on the Immortals I was struck with the fact that their varying attitudes, the curious diversities in their shapes of head, their expressions of face—some

visages smiling, smirking, others as sad and forlorn as eternity—confirmed strikingly the truth of the Darwinian theory of our human ancestry. There are several very small and very aged Immortals who faithfully answer our mental roll-call at these sittings. They seem to be nicely done up in cotton and flannel, and slip along to their corners as quietly as indisposed animals.

Of course many noted literary Frenchmen are not to be found here—Zola, Daudet, Bourget, Lemaître, France, Faguet, Sarcey, Heredia. Daudet long ago announced his intention of never posing as a candidate for the Academy, and has always made fun of it. The *Figaro* has just discovered that the Academy occasionally tilts the balance the other way in the following fashion. Sometimes letters come here addressed to Daudet by people who naturally think that he is one of the Immortals. Such missives are returned to the writers, and bear the legend: "Unknown at the Institute!"

In constantly refusing to admit Zola to its precincts, the Academy illustrates its moral rôle. This is quite a genuine rôle, for, to give one reason, the antechamber to this nightcap cupola is the sombre and lofty "Revue des Deux Mondes," which is the great monument of morals in France.

Unfortunately, its managing director, to the astonishment of everyone, abruptly fell from grace last summer, and the incident was closed by the selection of the formidable critic, M. Brunetière as his successor. The Revue has gained hereby in ability, and has lost nothing of its imperial frigidity. Bold indeed would be the common mortal who would go over and attempt to skate in the cold salons and among the cold columns of the potent sanctuary in the Rue de l'Université.

The "Revue" puts into training a goodly percentage of those who become Immortals, and no Bohemians, no Zolaists, no people with hair-in-the-wind careers and ideas, need apply. As a consequence, the favourite physical type of Academician which seems to evolve is a man who is more or less paved with baldness, who wears cotton in his ears, has cold feet, looks blank, for whom the visible world does not exist, and thus he either shuffles microscopically along the ground, or steps high and uncertainly like a blind horse.

The Parisians are always making sport of the Forty whose "Sesame" charms these magic doors. "Ils ont de l'esprit comme quatre!" is a daily parody of a familiar expression ordinarily applied to a single person. And what witty and well-

known old Frenchmen used to say humbly: "I am a mere cipher, not even an Academician!" Still all Frenchmen, save five or six, would give almost anything to be made Immortals.

The Academy is a typical French institution. It is a kind of social club *par excellence.* If women were suddenly removed from French life, the Academy would soon become extinct. Men would not pay any attention to it were it not for the other sex. Ambrosial dinners, and the lovely assiduities of the ladies who fan the flames of its vanity, keep it alive. Few masculine mortals could resist the perennial prospect and pleasure of coming out frequently in state, and being ardently admired by the *Parisiennes,* with their ribbons and perfumes and delicious manners and compliments.

The predominant gregarious instinct of the French is herein characteristically displayed—the love of company instead of solitude and individualism. M. Challemel-Lacour is re-expressing it in his address: "For four centuries, letters in France have developed by constantly mixing into our social life: they are a part of it. French thought has found, in this alliance with action, a preservative against the irregularities of imagination, and has found, also, that admirable equilibrium which constitutes our literary

authority." This, of course, strikes the keynote which forever resounds in the Academy, namely, sensible conventionality rather than bizarre originality; *le bon sens* rather than insanities and eccentric excesses of genius; form rather than lucubration; grace rather than profoundness; conversation, comedy, and life as it is, rather than poetry, reverie, romantic ideality, and solitary tragedy; the blending of great minds in harmony rather than the jarring of amazing individualities.

The Institute represents the French *cachet* of solidarity, the French gift of being charmingly and impersonally on parade, and the French conservatism in everything except national political life, since the influence of the Immortals on letters and thought is never progressive. The Academy is ever pulling back in the traces: it is always about one generation behind the times. Under Louis Philippe it was Legitimist or Napoleonic; under Louis Napoleon it was Orleanist; and under the Republic it still has the reminiscence of Orleanism. When Romanticism was on the throne the Institute was Classic; when Parnassianism was in favour it was Romantic; while Realism has been in vogue it has been Parnassian; when Idealism (?) comes, it will doubtless be sufficiently Realistic to accept Zola.

For, as a rule, a man becomes a member of the Academy when he, or his celebrity, or both, begin to die. And herein lies its other great *raison d'être:* it is not only a tribute to women, as we have noted, but it is a mausoleum for fame. Old age seems to be the most thoroughly and systematically looked out for and protected in France. French people make sure that their last days shall be comfortable. They venture no risks with Providence on that score. Youth and middle age are busily occupied in preparing for the coming years of feebleness and dependence. Even the most flighty, pin-headed French concert singer or *danseuse* is always industriously piling up the sous and buying *rentes* for the time when her decade shall be passed, and she can earn no money. Theatres, business houses, guilds, the Government, all virtually take care of their *personnel* until death, by systems of funds (*retraites*).

And so the Academy is a scheme for preserving the notability of its members when their glory shall have become comatose and moribund. A member may have ceased to work, or may have grown obsolete, yet the Academy conserves him in a measure to publicity, and he has the pleasure of tasting its honours every week as long as he lives. This house of refuge is an

immense boon for the old age of not a few noteworthy men, whom the changeable, short-memoried public would leave to die in an isolated and neglected senility. In this way, the Institute has been a nameless blessing to many an Immortal who would otherwise have been wholly forgotten. It is a hostage to the future, a guarantee against the vagaries of a progressive and fickle world, an insurance against the death of fame, a monument and a glorification of one's past and of the past.

It recalls the poem of Coppée on the young Pharaoh, who, in response to the adoring prayers of his people to commend them to some noble work which would perpetuate his name and renown, consented by saying: "Build my tomb!"

Renan.

(*December* 1892.)

It is a Saturday afternoon of last March. We step into the Collège de France at half-past two. We find our way into a homely little class-room. It is heated by a bulky stove, whose ugly pipes wander across the ceiling in search of an outlet. There are present about thirty people, of whom one-third are women. Some of the young men have Bibles in Hebrew, and two or three priests have come in. A small door opens, and Renan enters with a black book under his arm. He is smiling. He sits down behind a long, cheap desk, on which there is a glass of water. He takes up at once, without prelude or ceremony, the strain of his discourse, as if he were running over with things to say.

He is short, hulky, without shape. His face seems dull and heavy, and almost formless. It is enormous. The profile is powerful. The immense nose, noble forehead, and good chin belong to a man of his renown. He has no neck.

His hands are white, big, and fat, and have long nails. His eyes are large and brown, and they are handsome.

His voice is somewhat broken and uncertain. Frequently while speaking he looks down at the floor at his left, and apparently loses himself in thought. It is then that even those just in front of him can barely hear what he says. He appears infirm, and an unfriendly auditor might say that he is verging on dotage and garrulousness. He has no notes. The book he has brought in is the Old Testament. He has opened it, but does not refer to it. His topic is the Law of Moses. He uses the plainest language, and makes no pretension whatever to salient sentences or climaxes of any kind. He seeks neither to astonish nor amuse.

He goes once or twice to the blackboard and writes a few Hebrew or Greek characters in illustration of the changes in the ancient texts of the Bible. He draws these characters as if his hand were trained. They are firm, clean, perfect. He lays great stress on the chaste beauty of certain passages of Isaiah. He compares them to Homer. He cites the opinion of some authority who does not agree with his idea of the text, and softly exclaims: "Oh, oh, ce n'est pas çà, non, non, non." This phrase he

often repeats in the course of his lecture. He warms up with fine placid ardour when he happens to mention something which evidently recalls an old scholastic contest. His favourite words this afternoon are "simple" and "grandiose."

He has the clearest manner conceivable in examining and developing his thesis. You feel that he is a ripe scholar, an enthusiast for investigation, a man who does his work lucidly and loves to do it simply. You think of Mommsen's reference to him as "A savant in spite of his beautiful style." He has the air of a felicitous rather than a profound thinker, and of one who does not go along between two walls in his search of truth, but welcomes it in whatever form it presents itself. He seems the slave of no creed, no tradition, no superstition, no prejudice; at least he is as free from them as one can well be. You repeat to yourself—"What an admirable companion! What a delight he must be to his friends!" We know that he does not attempt to surround himself with the mystery of greatness; that he does not act as if he were conscious of having the halo of erudition above his head; that he does not pretend to be anything more than an average man in quest of the verity. He may often be frank in his statements.

He may often indicate amiably a cruel, naked fact, and give a velvet shock to our Anglo-American reverence for things for which our forefathers fought and died, yet his French delicacy wholly disarms one.

It strikes half-past three. He says that he is sorry he cannot continue the subject to-day. He gets up in his smiling way, tucks his book under his arm, someone fondly unlatches a little gate in the railing which hedges him in behind his desk, and in an instant the *grand maître* has passed through the door. Such was Renan as he appeared in his lecture-room last spring. Six months after I watched his funeral *cortège* leave the court of the Collège de France for the cemetery of Montmartre.

He was held in respect, we may believe, by all France. Monseigneur d'Hulst, one of the orator-priests of Notre Dame, discoursed on him one evening recently before the Cercle Catholique in the Rue du Luxembourg. It is fair to suppose that on this occasion there was heard what may be considered the final Catholic estimate of Renan. The drift of the *conférence* was outlined to me by a friend, a priest. Monseigneur d'Hulst said that Renan's private life was irreproachable; that he had wonderful courage; that he left the Catholic Church because he could not honestly

stay in it; that he was an important historian; that he was the best writer of French prose in this century. The remarks of the Monseigneur as a man were thus laudatory in the extreme, but his peroration was that of an ecclesiastic, since he concluded by affirming that Renan could only be regarded as a "mal faiteur" (a wrong-doer).

In literary France Renan is one of the highest contemporary ideals. Dumas calls him "the pope of free thought," and always has near his pillow one of Renan's books; "for," declares the eminent dramatist, "they satisfy my reason, my æsthetics, and my ideal." George Sand wrote that Renan had "the divine talent of giving wings to everything, and of artistically treating ideas which for others remained brute and without form." Banville, in a ballad, sang of him as one "who turns his phrase in a volute."

Writers and critics in France occasionally discuss the question, Which of Renan's books will live the longest? Strange to note, they do not imagine that it will be "La Vie de Jésus," nor any of his religious works. They fancy it will be his "Souvenirs of Infancy and Youth." Were any humble testimony admitted, I might say that no other French book of prose has made upon me such a fragrant and delightful impres-

sion. I know of no French volume which is a purer and more delectable inspiration to young men. Its rareness consists of its charm of simplicity and of its flavour of a rich soul. And in it is not merely embalmed the soul of a great man, but the soul of the quaint, half-forgotten, dreamy people of Brittany—a race, with all its affection and picturesqueness, as curious in its obstinacy as one of Renan's "old Breton saints."

No library is complete without the "Souvenirs of Infancy." The volume should lie where one can see it every day, as it is an irresistible plea for wholesome refinement and tenderness. It is, indeed, the product of one whose favourite poet was Lamartine, and whose cult of modesty was so scrupulously observed that he avoided the use of colons for fear of appearing to have something noteworthy to impart. Someone has truly observed that Renan "thought like a man, felt like a woman, and acted like a child." The scholar who fought a celebrated fight so bravely and sweetly, and who was wont to ask his mother, "Mamma, are you contented with me?" merits a place among one's models of our epoch.

If you have not read the "Souvenirs," do not defer the pleasure too long. And when you come to the book, read it slowly, that none of its gentle spirit and perfume escape you. It makes

humanity seem dearer, and keeps one from drifting too much with egotistic and insular tendencies—tendencies amusingly illustrated in an incident which Renan tells of in "Feuilles Détachées." One day a priest in Brittany delivered such a touching appeal that his hearers, with one exception, shed tears. A robust individual, who was leaning against one of the pillars, remained unmoved throughout the sermon. Some one said to him finally, "And you—you are not weeping?" "Why," he replied, "I don't belong to this parish!"

Renan practised what he hinted relative to the love of money, and left not a sou in the world—nothing but his library. This indifference to gold was saintly, yet its material legacies were not all agreeable. His writings brought him comparatively little revenue. He let his publisher, Lévy, arrange the terms, and gave no heed to them. He was not akin to Victor Hugo in this respect. Renan's naïve *insouciance* about the future harmonises with the indecisive trustfulness of his essays and addresses, and doubles their persuasiveness.

Perhaps the only thing to be regretted by those who trace the symmetry of his career, was his attempt to enter politics. He solicited office twice, I think, and both times was decidedly

beaten. How was a man of his qualities, after a life spent over his manuscripts, to know what average voters are like, and how were they to know who he was? He could never have learned the art of exploiting a political reputation. The French working-man is anti-clerical, yet he had never heard of Renan. The story is told of one who, in looking at the tickets preparatory to balloting at a certain election where Renan was a candidate, asked, "Who is this Renan?" "Why, he writes famous books on the Bible." "Oh! a priest! Well, that's one of the fellows that don't ketch my vote!"

Renan's meek sway in France is unquestionably great and enduring. And what, in a word, is "Renanism"? It is, they say, one state of seraphic existence for those who cannot accept the dogmas of the Church. It is a combination wherein thought is unconfined, and the heart and soul diffuse an incense redolent of spirituality. In "Renanism" the marriage of the brain and the heart leaves each free to exercise its peculiar functions in a pleasant union. Neither yields anything to either, and each is enriched and beautified by the other. This the "Souvenirs of Infancy" makes the French esteem more than any code or list of precepts which Renan could have formally laid down.

In France, until Renan's day, no one, it seems, had ever withdrawn from the Catholic prelacy on account of its intellectual teachings, and succeeded in exerting anything of that penetrating moral power which the Church claims for its singular grace and glory. Thus the clerisy could always apparently demonstrate that intellectual godlessness was inevitably moral godlessness. But Renan's personal influence for uprightness, sweetness, light, plain living and the home, is admitted by everyone, and no one in Paris appears to raise the question of the "Abbesse de Jouarre" "The Discours à l'Association des Etudiants," and the Letter to Flaubert, apropos of his "Tentation de Saint Antoine," do not for an instant pique a fear in honest French bosoms. The typical compatriot detractor of Renan contents himself with slender shafts of ridicule and irony, like the writer in the "Revue Positive," who, M. Anatole France tells us, remarked that Renan drew his own portrait in all his histories, and that he was represented notably in "L'Antichrist," under the traits and features in Nero.

It was his episcopal practices and virtues which serenely blessed the unctuous and benevolent historian of the people of Israel with unconscious triumph, for if Monseigneur d'Hulst could have put his finger for an instant on a

weakness, or a regrettable incident in Renan's moral constitution or conduct, he would have won the case of the Church, to his own satisfaction, at least. It was, nevertheless, to Renan that an anonym, several times a year, mailed a letter containing the sentence, "If, however, there prove to be a hell!"

M. Jules Lemaître wrote, in the *Debats* last October, the following epitaph on his sceptical and beatific curate:—

"There are many among us whom Renan has saved from impiety. He has taught us how we can cease to believe in the dogmas of religion without severing ourselves from the past. He has taught us how to cherish, in spite of all, the myths which have consoled and sustained men throughout the centuries. He has shown us how to love the ethics and the dreams of the Church, and how to preserve our soul intact, with all its obscure powers, and with all its inherited needs."

Literary Lectures.

FRANCE is the land of famous—popular—literary critics. Have you not thought that there is in Germany, England, and the United States scarcely one living literary reviewer of current repute? It is, indeed, somewhat embarrassing to attempt to name one well-known German, English, or American writer of to-day, whose occupation is, and whose national if not international fame rests on general literary criticism —whose celebrity is won, like Sainte-Beuve's, by striking notes along the whole *clavier* of a literature. Not that these three countries have no reviewers of books. On the contrary, critics of the humanities abound there as in France. Yet they appear rather disposed to be specialists who devote years to one subject. Therefore the domains of their reputation are of comparatively narrow limits: it has not the leaven of a facile household and sidewalk, news-stand and *pension* popularity. The French reviewers, unlike their non-Latinized brothers, handle all the varieties

of literary theme with equal ease, charm, and public success. They treat religion, philosophy, poetry, tragedy, the *Vaudeville*, the Chat Noir—every conceivable topic within the range of French letters and Parisian book life.

Perhaps you have fancied, as had I, that the literary censor on the Seine writes in a swallow-tail, wears the neatest of brilliants, uses perfumed lace handkerchiefs, and is a model of universal taste and scrupulous fashion. Nothing could well be further from the truth. Possibly M. Jules Lemaitre is enchased in some such a setting, but his critical *confréres* are plain men who toil in a plain way. And all of them, whether fastidious or not, accomplish a fixed amount of work fortnightly—turn out their one or two volumes annually—with a certain machine-regularity, being little inclined, relatively speaking, to wait for hours of inspiration and particular moods of lettered felicity. They are to be found with a pen in hand every morning in the year, for it is merely to continue writing that they slip off for a part of the summer to Ville d'Avray or Sceaux, or even as far as Normandy or Brittany. They are not fond of flitting away from their cage of Paris where the literary existence is nervous, and given up to each day as it passes. They need

the champagne of keeping their physical selves and their names constantly among and before the Parisians.

Living and working in the exhilarating atmosphere of their metropolis, the French critics of *belles-lettres* have not the habit, as a rule, of letting a manuscript season long in a drawer. They think, I suppose, that such a practice may be pushed to excess. The story is told of an "ideally conscientious reviewer" who, apropos of a new comedy, determined to do full justice to the author, the public, and himself, if it took six months. So he went night after night to see the piece, and insisted on revising his judgment, refashioning his paragraphs, repolishing his details. Finally, he published his essay, and in it proved that the play did not merit a run of ten evenings. It had already run a hundred!

The foreigner who familiarizes himself with the writings of the present Parisian reviewers is struck, of course, by the ignorance of all contemporary literature save that of their own country. The one modern language they know is French. It is true that they have sipped cups of tea from M. de Vogüé's *samovar* of Russian fiction. Yet this appears to be the only general courtesy they have shown foreign letters of our

century or indeed of any modern century. There is not, and never has been, a cult—a veritable cult—in France of Dante, of Shakespeare, of Goethe. An exception, though, may be made in favour of the land of Cervantes, because it has played a certain conspicuous rôle in French *belles-lettres*—a rôle beginning with "Le Cid" of Corneille, and continuing with "Gil Blas" and "Figaro" and with "Hernani," "Ruy Blas," "Carmen." It is the amiable and amusing M. Sarcey who puts the top layer of stone on, as it were, this Chinese wall of the national insularity of French literary critics by suggesting now and then that it would be better if Shakespeare were not staged in Paris. He boasts of the fact that he is unable to find any considerable satisfaction in the author of Hamlet. He holds that "the grand Will" is an overrated playwright—a kind of persistent fad.

All the above is the result, in great part, of the traditions of French education, which virtually hugs Greek and Latin to the exclusion of exotic modernity, with something of the old-time royal and imperial idea in France that civilization has Athens, Rome, and Paris for its three torches and seals, and that the rest of the world is in more or less unenlightened and Cimmerian states of barbarism.

Together with his almost incessant activity of pen, the Parisian censor of letters is quite apt to be a lecturer. M. Anatole France, however, is not a *conférencier*, and, in truth, has latterly drifted wholly into the realm of fiction. Nor does the genial M. Lemaitre court the orator's chair, for his Fates take unkindly to proposals that his delicacy and *esprit* should be dissipated and lost in the atmosphere. An athletic-looking, handsome man, he has the accomplished bearing and manners of a society gentleman everywhere except on the platform. In this environment he is breathless and awkward ; his fingers clutch nervously around his face ; his attitudes annoy him ; he stumbles, halts, and seems painfully in fear that his next sentence will utterly refuse to come forth.

M. Faguet, also, was not intended for a lecturer. Of strong physique, he has an agreeable countenance, a warm air, alertness, vigour. and he at once wins your solid interest. But he is rather *sans-gêne* in his chair. His arms fly about in a multitude of incongruous and ungainly gestures which have little relation to his remarks. He perks up his head, and twists his eyes from one side to the other, keeping them half screwed together, as if endeavouring to be incisive, epigrammatic, *spirituel.* And he

really triumphs in all this in an uncommon degree.

The rest of the great literary critics of Paris are famous professional *conférenciers.* The *doyen* among them is the venerable M. Deschanel of the Collège de France. He is the favourite with a certain class of unoccupied adults, who are fond of being lightly entertained on themes of books. Soft-voiced, gentle, witty, he reads his manuscript in a most conversational and modest way, and sweetly serves his hearers with harmless sugar-and-water impressions, being only too well aware that their literary stomachs are feeble. M. Larroumet, although much younger, is to the Sorbonne, we may say, what M. Deschanel is to the Collège de France. He attracts, as a rule, a promiscuous public, and vociferates his notes successfully, ascending readily all the foothills of the lecturer's task without undertaking to scale any of its peaks and summits.

M. Brunetière is a belligerent who likes to crack people's heads. Vinegar foams around the edges of his mouth. He fulminates the thunderbolts of his fury and contempt in every direction, terrifying the dialectic weak-kneed, frightening

into silence the babes and sucklings that pule at the pap of *belles-lettres*, and scaring all the lettered old maids, youthful *bas bleus*, effeminate *dilettanti*, and innocuous connoisseurs clear off the territory of literary French criticism. The wonder-loving Parisians frequently express their astonishment that so small a statured person can make the earth quake and the heavens resound.

M. Brunetière is an admirable *conférencier*—incomparably the best in Paris. He is an orator and an actor in the lecture chair. He possesses the voice, the manner, the confidence, the conviction of a triumphant speaker. He has the lost art of believing emphatically, and without hesitation, that which he is enunciating. Unvisited with the *chiaroscuros* of indecision and doubt, he is not haunted by uncertain, Impressionistic twilights nor any violet hazes of a volatile Pyrrhonism. He belongs to the hard, irreconcilable caste of Bossuets who would govern oratorically and oracularly with a sense of autocracy.

It appears that the specialists smile when he trips through their precincts. The savants on, for instance, the origins of French letters, or on modern French lyrical poetry, seem to be aware that M. Brunetière's chapters on these themes bristle with errors, superficialities, untested

assumptions, tentative propositions, hasty generalisations, unrestrained conclusions. But what do we—the common public—know or care about the savants and specialists, hidden as they are behind slowly and elaborately constructed bulwarks of erudite induction and deduction, and buried in subterranean galleries in their microscopic searchings for nuggets of verities? What we can admire and applaud, in our naïve, half-ignorant, popular love of heroic adventure and ferocious feat, is the spectacle of a plumed and wrathy warrior, on a puffing steed, who, "quaerens quem devoret," goes charging across the domain of French literature, as if it were a wild uneven plain, destroying windmills that do not exist, unhorsing knights that are already unhorsed, rescuing virgins who are safe behind moat and rampart—apparently unimpeded, in this uninhabited region, by dykes of argument, untroubled by having to be wary of breaches of logic, and engaging willingly in the thickets of an untilled syntax. To this stimulating practice of knight-errantry, and to this superior oratorical talent, add the qualities of a virile ability, indefatigable industry, eminent respectableness, the gift of being notably *suggestive,* and the feudal prudence of having castled early in the game in the inexpugnable corner of the "Revue

des Deux Mondes," and we easily understand the explanation of the redoubtable and estimable celebrity of M. Brunetière.

Inviting hostilities, he usually has had a "small war" on hand with the Bohemian *littérateurs*, and with the irresponsible young fry and little dare-devils of the Paris press—all those fellows who persist in wandering outside the folds of a decorous Saint Cyr literature, and keep burning Bossuet and Madame de Maintenon in effigy, and shouting "Baudelaire! Verlaine!" They delight in trying to pepper M. Brunetière, and the fact that his irascibility does not harmonise with his broad, majestic topics furnishes them occasional excuses for regaling their readers with irreverent and trivial gossip.

He himself, however, is by no means dumb to humour and *esprit*, and frequently causes his hearers to laugh. "Now," he will say, "I am not going to make a comedy of myself this afternoon by talking of love in comedy. If I were to speak of love under any circumstances, it would be to a much less numerous audience."

His course of lectures on Bossuet last winter ('93-'94), in the New Sorbonne, resulted in unexpected publicity. Here was an immense amphitheatre, whose ends are clasped by the long, declamatory fresco of the gentle Puvis de

Chavannes, and wherein no one can be heard over twenty feet, owing to the wretched acoustics. The regular Sorbonne professors refused to be swallowed up in this big whirlpool and silenced by its echoing noise. Was the room, then, to be condemned forever to official reunions, and to the gala fêtes of the annual distributions of prizes? No! M. Brunetière consented to swim in this maelstrom, and the ladies flocked thither, with all the *furore* that even the traditions of M. Caro hint of. The orator thus had a vast theatre filled chiefly with enthusiastic women, of whom one-half never heard any of his sentences, and, according to common report, would not have comprehended them if they had—facts which, nevertheless, seemed only to increase the ferment of the gatherings.

The students, arriving in the hall at the appointed hour from their class-rooms, found the suitable seats at these *séances* occupied by women, whose buzzing conversation, rustling ribbons, and restless hats, conspired with the bad acoustics in making the taking of notes practically impossible. The young collegians before long began to convert the lectures into scenes of pandemonium, to organise "monômes," and to create Bedlam generally. M. Brunetière, little daunted, hurled forth proclamations of defiance, issued a call

for arms, declared himself in a state of military defence, to the end that he and the Sorbonne were guarded by troops on the occasion of each *conférence*, and he was like some Sire of Coucy, proudly protected at every turn by soldiers and iron, and announcing: "Je ne suis roy, ne prince, ne comte aussy ——"

The *séances* ceased, not because they had come to their intended close, but because the trouble and expense of having a thousand policemen in and around the New Sorbonne whenever M. Brunetière gave a discourse, were regarded at length too great. It is said that the unfortunate event has divorced him completely from the students, yet was it to be expected that the collegiate youth of Paris would get, or remain, in touch with an editor of the "Revue des Deux Mondes"?

M. Sarcey is the perfect type of a *bourgeois*. He has never rubbed on city polish. Sometimes in the *couloirs* of the Théâtre Français he may be taken for a cattleman who might have just brought a bunch of steers into Kansas City. Again, he will be dressed in plain, old-fashioned broadcloth, and look like an indulgent grandpa. When he gives afternoon talks to girls (and any-

one else) on French Literature, in the Hall in the Boulevard des Capucines, he suddenly moves in among his feminine auditors about four o'clock, betraying his presence by vigorously blowing a resonant nose. He commences shaking hands without knowing it, makes vague remarks concerning the weather, keeps in the way of those who are entering, and seldom finishes a sentence because he is so accommodatingly jostled back and forth.

From the topic of the weather he floats to the question of the time of day, compares his watch with the watches of the ladies around him, and reaches the conclusion that it must be from four to half-past four o'clock. The young women tell him how much they enjoyed and profited by his last lecture. He is pleased at this, and calls the subject to mind. "Let me see—I believe we were speaking of Corneille—yes—and what did we learn that Father Corneille did for the tragedy?" A stillness begins to mow through the chatter and hubbub of the room. He repeats the query in a louder voice, and his maiden disciples conspicuously collapse into noiseless insignificance. At length a lad, in the rear of the hall, offers a satisfactory response, and relieves the distress of the suspense. M. Sarcey risks no other ambitious interrogatories of this

sort, and seeks to save the self-respect of his young ladies by proposing such elementary and open-door queries as: "About where was Corneille born? About when did he die?" These inquiries, however, are scarcely more successful among the frightened *ingénues*, and he has to rely on the lad, who thus serves as a kind of *claque* — that institution so indispensable in Paris.

In this way M. Sarcey, all the while mixed in with his audience, drifts into his talk. He lands on Boileau, the Satirist, as the theme for to-day. In beginning to speak of Boileau he falls athwart Régnier, and fumbles hints of comparison between the two satirical poets, evidently leaning in his preferences towards Régnier. Régnier, he says, has imagination. Boileau always wanted to express the whole, but Régnier, like Hugo, gave a perspective to a word. Finally, it occurs to M. Sarcey that he ought to get up on the rostrum, so he unwieldily clambers the steps behind him, and sits down at a desk, whereon he discovers a glass of sugared water, a spoon, and a volume of Boileau.

He buries his nose in the book, and reads aloud from its "Satires," interrupting, at rather long *étapes*, the monotony of the Alexandrines by varieties of observations having no apparent

relation to the topic or any topic, and accompanying the same with tambourining the sugar-spoon on the table. "That line is true satire. They may tell me what they please, but that is real satire. I know the *jeunes gens* mock at old Boileau nowadays. You know my opinion of the *jeunes gens.* Of course, if I were a young fellow, I would do as the young fellows do; nevertheless, there is always much yet for young men to learn. . . ." He used to write poetry when he was a youth—

"La princesse venait, la, la, la, la . . .

. . . . . .

Maintenant on est gai, li, li, li, li . . . ."

He once saw "Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie" played in Amsterdam, and he found that the public encored the passages which the public of the Théâtre Français encores. What does that prove? It is hardly necessary for him to explain. Why, it proves that when he saw "Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie" in Amsterdam, he found that the public encored the passages which the public of the Théâtre Français encores. He might read Voltaire's "Candide" twenty times to a circle of women, and they would never understand it. The women never read anything of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and

that's precisely the one point in which they resemble the men.

Long since has he forgotten the hour and the place. Six o'clock arrives, and he, with his head in his book, is still butting the Alexandrines of the headstrong Boileau. At five minutes past six several chaperons slip away with their charges. At a quarter past six a third of the audience is trying to go out quietly. M. Sarcey is still butting Boileau. At twenty minutes past six the *conférence* is joggled to an abrupt close as unceremonious and inartistic as was the commencement, and every one, including the lecturer, is stumbling over disarranged chairs and bumping against his neighbour, as if in a tenebrous precinct and in a thick-thumbed mood.

Thus M. Sarcey, with his mouth as with his pen, gossips and roves about. Looming and lunging through the world, without anchor or sail or signal-lights, he presents a unique and popular spectacle. His ostensible shibboleth is "good sense," as we are well aware. If he concludes that a drama is not based on common sense, he deals it a heavy blow. This is the bone he picks with Shakespeare. Why, he asks, should sound-minded, respectable, law-abiding people cultivate a lot of "cranks" like Hamlet and Lady Macbeth, horrible humpbacks like Richard III.,

swaggering drunkards like Falstaff? *Grace à Dieu!* French literature is clear of such insanities, freaks, and monstrosities.

If we go over to the Odéon some afternoon, when he, in his *bourgeois* style, is planted on its capacious stage, with the classic grace and poise of Athalie for his theme, we hear him entertaining a large audience in a way that has become a tradition, and that makes us reluctant to miss one of his sentences, whether written or spoken. "Now Joad [the high priest in Athalie] was a regular politician. He was a good priest, but he had an eye for the main chance. He waited until the little prince—his *protégé*—had received his first communion, and could ride a horse. For what does a pretender amount to who can't ride a horse? *Mon Dieu!* I don't say that Joad was acting in bad faith, or that he was playing at comedy. Does anybody know, for that matter, where sincerity ends and artifice begins with the great *diplomates?* If Joad prophesies, it is because he feels at that instant really inspired of God. Yet you may be sure that if he did not feel inspired, he would prophesy just the same. What he says in his delirium is vague, as, for instance: 'Heaven! Spread about thy dews, and let the earth bring forth its Saviour!' Now, that does not mean anything. That has no

more sense than the famous 'From the top of these pyramids forty centuries look down upon you.' Still it is with these grand sayings which mean nothing that men have ever been led."

One always fancies that M. Sarcey steers home after his lecture, and eats a big dinner in his dressing-gown and slippers, prosperously and benevolently contented with having churned, for an hour or two, the cream of French literature into—not butter at three francs a pound—but somehow into buttermilk, retailing at three sous a quart to the *petits bourgeois* and orphan asylums of Paris. And you picture him comfortably falling asleep for the night, free from anxieties over all such ominous questions as Free Will and Fatality in the Drama, undisturbed by the responsibilities and annoyances of complex subtleties, of erudition, of profoundness, of lucid unity, undistressed by the thought of having to remember what he said yesterday, or what he is going to say to-morrow, unconcerned about the proclaimed griefs of any new or long-suffering Art, and satisfied with the feeling that sufficient unto the day is the fulness thereof !

The Paris Dailies.

(*March* 1894.)

THE Paris press is generally held to be the most powerful and corrupt in the world. It is the most powerful because it grasps the peace of Europe and the political fate of the Pope in its palm, as well as the destiny of France. The French are led—governed—more by their daily papers than by their magazines, for France lacks the equivalent of that great balance-wheel in English thought and life, namely, the twelve weighty British reviews. France has only four or five. The Parisians say that it is the Puritan Sabbath in Great Britain which accounts for the difference—that the British need some sort of heavy, periodical reading to pass their solemn and tedious Sundays.

The Paris press is notoriously subsidised. It is always bribed and expects to be bribed, and this is such an open secret that a Frenchman thinks nothing of it. The noise of the most venal papers in Paris is listened to with lively

interest and enjoyment. That French journals should share in the Panama spoliation in pay for their aid in floating the enterprise on the credulous public of small French investors, caused no comment in France, for it was in line with custom. Honourable exceptions must be made, still they are undoubtedly few. As a rule, there is no place in a Paris sheet without its price. The distinction between paid items and honest news is thus rather lightly observed, and the certain lack of conviction and of sacredness that one feels in nearly all Paris journals is, therefore, inevitable. One comes to regard them more as sources of amusement than as sources of instruction and serious thought. Their first and main aim is to entertain, to enliven, and, consequently, the typical skill of the contributor lies in his cleverness in disporting charmingly around his subject. Themes are treated with effervescing pens, so that the articles have the sparkle and exhilaration of champagne.

The daily journals of Paris parade, perhaps, more of original wit and humour than the American press, but infinitely less accumulated pleasantry. The amassed columns of whimsicalities which adorn our American papers and go the rounds, are instances of our American fashion of trying to do everything in a whole-

sale way. The French have the art of not spoiling a jest by putting a dozen jests next it. In this, as in their displays in shop windows, their motto is: Exhibit few articles—one article. Their artistic sense enters here; they prefer to attract by choice. We, in contrast, court the principle of quantity—masses.

Esprit in French papers is more or less infiltrated in all their articles, or assumes the shape of a professedly facetious contribution. Thus they are not fond, as our dailies are, of flanking a sober column, containing not a suspicion of a smile, with a compact column of jokes. The most characteristic type of humorous journalism in Paris is conversational. The reader is treated to colloquies, scenes of burlesque, *saynètes*, wherein *esprit* is developed in the form of repartee. This responds to the French genius for comedy, and satisfies their need to talk, and to talk wittily. Even the stately *Temps* has occasionally an amusing sketch in dialogue—an interlocutory hitting off of the current political or social topic.

The average jest in a French paper does not seem to me to be intrinsically better than the average American pleasantry. It is only once or twice a week that I really laugh at the one or two funny items which the *Figaro*

prominently presents each morning. Take the one of yesterday as a fair example: "There are no longer any children: A young man of six, who had heard the Panama scandals discussed intimately in the family, because his father had been actively engaged in the affair, announced the other day to his sire: 'Pa, if you don't give me ten sous, I will have you cited before the Grand Jury.'" Still, the wit of the French press is the most celebrated in the world. It has a way of getting brilliantly disseminated. It is blessed with a certain distinction. Our American press is, after all, so far away from Europe.

The French dailies revel little in illustrations. At rare intervals one catches glimpses of the crayon of Caran d'Ache. Just now the *Figaro*, by way of exception, is indulging in a series of sketches by Forain, and they are, of course, unique. He makes his characters say what is in the text, and this the illustrating artists do not by any means always do in other countries. Herein, in general, the French are superior. We are apt to lose precisely the best part of pictorial humour. It is not so much what is said, but the manner of the person who is saying it. A familiar example of this shortcoming with us is seen in the well-known drawings of Du Maurier,

which have been running for years in *Harper's Monthly.* His characters, as he delineates them, destroy, rather than accentuate, the conversational effect of the dialogue.

The two following themes illustrate those of Forain in the *Figaro.* Bismarck before William. After having fallen on each other's necks, William says: "I am exceedingly glad to see you for several reasons, but what I want above all, is to read you a play I have written in five acts." Again, a young lady, all bundled up in grief on a long chair. An elderly gentleman, wrapped up thickly in his overcoat, leans over toward her in the industrious attempt to extricate his son and heir from some delicate complications. "Well, well, Mademoiselle, I cannot for the life of me understand how you could have thought that my son was serious about it—a *gamin* who is not twenty-seven years old!"

Despatches do not characterise the French journals. They do not compare with our papers in furnishing the facts of the day. Their first page is not taken up with telegrams as a drawing card, but with editorials, contributed articles, and reportorial paragraphs. In this respect they are not so modern a pattern of newspaper as ours. The editorial, which has declined with us,

still holds undisputed sway in Paris sheets. Their meagreness of despatches applies naturally and notably to America, for the French have so little to do with us as a nation. They are more interested about our Indians than about us, and confuse us delightfully with Central and South Americans, and with Blacks as well as Redskins. They are disposed to think we are a race of freaks, always doing unheard-of and gigantic things, and disporting along the borders of a region where erratic imaginations and an impossible climate streak up and down in a lurid fashion, with Buffalo Bill and his troupe skirting through at intervals. Their journals are largely responsible for this conception of America, since, as a rule, they only insert items concerning our colossal railroad accidents, our ravages by cyclone, our negroes skinned alive in Kentucky, our saloon-keepers turned Prohibitionists in Iowa, and sending their saloons up in an apotheosis of flame and cloud. Deal out such information about a country to readers year after year, and what must be their conclusion?

The *Rappel*, which has a two or three line despatch from the United States each day, surprised everybody early one December with a six liner, describing the phenomenon that six inches of snow had fallen in Minnesota. They

were evidently under the impression that Minnesota lay in the south. This is the longest American despatch I believe I have ever seen in the *Rappel.* And, for that matter, why should the *Rappel* know about Minnesota any more than the average Chicago paper knows about the department of the Mayenne?

This relative inattention to despatches means the absence in France of that contention for telegraphic messages which is a feature of American journalism. This lack of strife for news extends to the social columns of the Paris press. There is no breathless rush for, no wrangling about, chatty paragraphs. How freely and easily the Parisian newspaper gets its gossip is illustrated by a little incident which chanced to come to my notice last summer. I had occasion to offer to the *New York Herald* (Paris Edition) a bit of news from the seashore. Precisely a week after it appeared in the *Herald* the *Figaro* unearthed it, and published it in double-leaded type in one of its costliest columns. From the *Figaro* the item was taken and again printed by the *Herald.* Four days later, the *Gaulois* produced it, having, doubtless discovered it in the *Figaro;* and the following day the *Echo de Paris* inserted it, having evidently found it in the *Gaulois.* In none of the papers was

the paragraph accredited to its source or any source.

This indulgent practice, a Parisian would correctly observe, is an indication of the way the French have of living sweetly together. That is to say, it is due to the lack of the element of rivalry, for competition appears to us so conspicuously absent in France in all secular departments of activity. But while the social columns of the Paris papers are wanting in, we may say, a certain freshness of news, the charm of the style in which the paragraphs are composed is a never-failing font of delight. They display a diaphanous elegance and a picturesque taste which are indeed exquisite, and make our American manner of turning out social notes in a wholesale, machine-made way seem hard and grating. The social vocabulary of the French is undoubtedly more complete and brilliant and refined than ours.

The Paris journals, with five or six exceptions, sell for a penny. They cost more when subscribed for by the year than when bought from day to day at the news-stands.

This is in application of the great principle of French commerce: "Sell cheaper by retail than by quantity." Herein, to my mind, lies the fundamental reason why the French have never

been eminently a commercial race; they have never learned the science of making considerable reductions in wholesale rates.

The *Figaro*, still to-day the most celebrated of French sheets, is simply the most triumphant illustration of what is perhaps the leading trait of Paris journals—capriciousness! It has consumately exploited this art to a distinction which is at once fascinating and disquieting. There is, of course, a serious side to the Paris press, as shown, for instance, by the *Temps* and the *Journal des Débats*—two admirable journals; yet they only serve to emphasize, by contrariety, the capriciousness of the French press at large. "Spreadeagleism" is what our American newspapers offer by a contrast of similarity.

The press, they say in Paris, threatens to kill the book just as the book killed the cathedral; and a new institution will after a while be contrived which will cause the present daily paper to appear a primitive and inconvenient thing, and kill it. *Ceci tuera cela.* The process of assimilating the daily news still consumes and demands too much time and physical energy. This will be but a result of the drift of modern civilisation toward the completer realisation of each twenty-four hours as it passes. We live more in to-day and yesterday than our ancestors

lived in their present. The realm and reign of actuality are greater now than ever!

A Parisian wit has remarked that journalism leads to everything—provided one leaves it; and this theme is developed in a way by the following sayings of two French cynics of to-day: "The words and sentences which do not mean anything have had the most success in France." . . . "What an odd generation this is! We believe in nothing, and we swallow everything!"

Random Pencillings in the Salons.

(*May* 1893.)

Poor Charles Bovary could scarcely hear the opera at Rouen on that famous evening because of the noise of the orchestra. One scarcely sees the paintings at the salons because of the many canvases. Thirty-three hundred pictures to look at, in order to find the few that are to abide with you!

Bonnat's portrait of his mother is coarse and greasy. There is dirt in the creases of the face. It is wholly lacking in sweetness and sentiment. He paints flesh as if it were yellow, tanned leather. This is why his "Renan" last year was a *chef d'œuvre:* Renan's skin was leathery. An exception in Bonnat's favour is the rather refined portrait which he is exposing this year as a companion piece to that of his mother.

Roybet is the French, and Alma Tadema the English sensation here at the Champs-Elysées. "His pictures seem to be done up in curl papers,"

one of my friends was saying of the latter the other day. His "Roses of Heliogabalus" attracts the wondering Parisians, for his palette is new to them.

One sees a few snow scenes by Parisian brushes, but the French cannot paint snow. Notice in comparison the winter scenes here by the Russian, Chelminski. The moral is that there is much snow in Russia and not in France. One notes several views of northern *fiords*, and observes how the rareness of the Norway atmosphere makes its coastscapes appear so naked and severely angular.

Gérôme, Maignan, and Detaille are not exhibiting this spring. Henner is here with his usual waxy, nude women, stretched out in ethereal languor. Ah, what grace! Glance merely at this arm afloat in a reverie of ideality, without hint of bone, joint, or sinew: a melting vision of suppleness—of yearning dipped in corporal ease.

Laurens also is present, with his customary absence of good colouring. Yet he can tell a story. Remark the vehement and tragic attitude of his St Chrysostom arraigning the Empress Eudoxia. He is arraigning, indeed, despite the fact that the very poor values advance the background of the church into the plane of the pulpit, and go far to destroy the spaciousness and power

of the painting. He relates an authentic story, too, in his other canvas. Here a young girl is kneeling on a chair, and singing to some men, who are dressed in the garb of the Revolution. Her mother, the widow of a Vendean general, has been amnestied by the Convention, and has sent her daughter of seven to the local tribunal of Nantes to get "Mamma's letters of pardon." She is told that she can have them if she will sing her best song. The little maid is innocently rendering, with all the energy she possesses, a Chouan song, whose anti-revolutionary refrain is "Down with the Republic! Long live the King!" Nevertheless, his story recounts that she went home with "Mamma's letters of pardon."

Yet we come to see other things. One of them is the refreshing delicacy of Raphael Collin's "Sleep." It is a woman's head, reposing amid its dreamy waves of hair. One thinks of Shelley's muse in the cool, sea-curled haunts of the Cumaean Sibyl.

Lulled by the coil of crystalline streams, the green background brings out the fresh red tints of cheek and ear. It is not the art of painting flesh into shell and conch, but the rarer art of flushing pearl and conch with the pink and thrill of life.

Then there is an unknown painter—Didier-Pouget—with his refined, delightful luxuries of long heather fields on May mornings. You smell the heather and feel the gently and generously insisting sunlight. In the distance there unrolls a whole landscape with a town—all veiled in the plum-hued gauze of French haze. Who this charming artist is I do not know. Last year, also, he had a beautiful picture of heather fields. No one speaks of him nor hears of him. He appears not to have a friend at court. Not even has he an "Honourable Mention," while scores of "Hors Concours," of no merit whatever, are hanging here.

Then, Pointelin—right here by our elbow. Fancy a canvas about fourteen by twenty-four inches, with a band of brown paint for the lower half and a grayish band for the upper half. There is not a tree, house, man, flower, nor anything in it—nothing but a reflection in a partly hidden pool. That is a Pointelin landscape. It seems at first merely a coarse brown and gray daub. Someone suggests to you that it means something. You get over to the other side of the room to fill the canvas with atmosphere, and the painting slowly takes hold in you. It is a priceless mood of melancholy, in which the weary folds of your soul smooth out along a

soothing space of hilltop and sky. The picture is plain and facile, yet it quietly makes its way toward the depths within you with thoughtful directness.

In the New Salon are bold, fantastic colours —greens, blues, fireworks. Whistler was the exotic of interest here last year. This year it is Burne-Jones, with three metallic and slate canvases. A young artist of my acquaintance calls him the Puvis de Chavannes, and Alma Tadema the Bouguereau, of England.

Whistler's influence is to be easily traced in both Salons. His idealised women are to be met with under other brushes — under Gandara's brush, for instance. Where do you suppose Whistler finds the models he converts into the exquisite visions of a "Lady in Gray," or a "Lady in Green," for they are perfect Beatrices in "Much Ado," Beatrixes in "Henry Esmond," Gwendolens in "Daniel Deronda"? I chance to know of a "lady" whom he has thus portrayed. She is, physically as well as spiritually, one of the most unshapely, unlovely, and forbidding old subjects imaginable for a painter.

Zorn does excellent work with his Sweden and its people. See the *wet* water on the *wet* flesh of

this girl washing her arms. The picture is made with a few broad and easy strokes. It has admirable light, tone, and atmosphere.

And what of the Mysticism in contemporary French painting that we hear so much of? Is it religion? Is it a profound moral impulse? Is it a fad? These questions came up one evening when I happened to be dining at the home of M. Georges Pellissier, the able and well-known young literary critic. He said that the Mystic agitation was, in his opinion, a caprice, a superficial fashion of a day—that it was destined to have no genuine tenure, no serious influence, in France.

Doubtless it has occurred to you that if Mysticism were really to come, its interpretations would not be confined to *belles-lettres* and to the arts, but would envelop the habits and styles of common, everyday life. It would be in vogue for men to wear undiscouraged and obscurant beards and long hair—a Mystic effect. It would be the mode for ladies to train their hair low over their temples and ears, and make apparent an abundance of it, instead of frizzing it almost out of existence. This latter style has been the proper companion of the masculine one of wearing only the moustache, and having the head trimmed closely. Maids with the hair brought

down over their brows, like Leonardo's models, are Mystic maids. You see a few of them on the streets of Paris this spring. A year ago they were visible nowhere but in the *ateliers* of the young artists who were painting the Incomprehensible.

If crinoline were to come, it would be the feminine garb for the Mystic cult. Men's clothes, instead of being of the scanty, tight patterns demanded by clipped craniums and shaven faces, would be full, and flow in the mystery of ample folds. The youthful French Romantics of 1830 affected long locks, huge hats, and billowy coats and trousers, and crinoline then began its career of wide expanse and glory. All this corresponded to the vague, shifting, and supernatural phases of the Romantic school. These copious fashions are the inevitable expression in dress of the Uncertain, of the Mystic, just as the present snug, close-fitting fashions are the appropriate expression in dress of the epoch wherein clean-cut Realism and relentless scientific and matter-of-fact standards hold supreme sway.

Apropos of a Sargent Portrait.

(*May* 1894.)

SARGENT'S portrait of "Mrs Hammersley," at the Champ de Mars, suggests the speculative idea that the cult of the face is not a French trait. In tracing down the list of the modern French portraits you have seen—those of women, since we are speaking of the portrait of a lady—can you visualise one countenance that, for and in itself, has awakened in you an indelible souvenir —that has spoken a particular word to you? Are not all these faces in your catalogue empty, formal, fit for fashion plates, outshone by the wearer's garb or environment? French women on canvases appear to have nothing to say. They show no interest in anyone or anything, nor does one feel an interest in them, aside from the art with which they are reproduced.

To turn from canvases to books. Do not countenances seem to stand out more strikingly from the pages of English literature than from those of the French? Recall the faces protruding with characterful effect in George Eliot's

novels—in "Adam Bede," in "Romola." George Sand does not equal her in this respect. Victor Hugo was apparently unable to burn a visage into your consciousness, and still no one doubtless has ever surpassed him in making mere vacant human forms move vaguely and ominously across paragraphs and stanzas. How the hollow figure of Jean Valjean looms through "Les Misérables"! At the present moment I think of no one in the French realm of letters who had a better gift of faces than Molière, and yet I fancy he does not rival many English writers for this endowment.

The Anglo-Saxon race would seem to depend especially upon the face for the expression and interpretation of character, while the French are more disposed to rely on the general appearance of the person—on the attitudes and carriage of the body. We say, "What a strong, individualistic countenance!" The French say, "What a graceful person; how well he carries himself; what a good air he has!" They are inclined to read his message from his whole bearing. In this they attach to the Greek artistic tradition—they have more of the cult of the body than we. Like the Hellenes, they study and esteem the whole figure, whether clothed or nude. We, on the contrary, rather affect the Puritan and unartistic custom,

It is our instinct to try to hide the body, to overlook it, to forget it; we would dress it in a shapeless black robe, for instance, to make it unbeautiful and unmeaning. But, on the other hand, we would throw the notice on the face, and render it more impressive, giving it deeper lines and more variety, and, if beauty, then a personal beauty.

Or, can we not go back beyond the Puritan epoch, and take the great era of painting with its Christian inspiration, and find therein that notable attention was awarded the face? Indeed, do we not date from the Man of Galilee in this cult and discrimination of countenance? What absorbs us about His physical self is the thought of what His face must have been as the lofty and spiritual part—the chancel—of the temple of the human frame. And this was in typical and eternal contrast with the Greek Apollo, who shone by the splendour of his form. As an illustration of this Christian regard for the countenance, I have never remarked on canvas faces so masterful in the wrinkled intensity of mortal experience, responsibility, and contemplation, combined with the confidence, conviction, and manifest power of their faith, as those in the religious paintings of Memling, in the Hospital of St John at Bruges.

We seem, therefore, to substitute the culture of the visage for that of the body; and the French, for their success and distinction, display more comeliness in the conduct of their persons than we, knowing better how to use their limbs and direct their attitudes with effective grace. And this is why it would appear suggestive to say that, notwithstanding centuries and estate, Sargent's lovely lady, with the gently insisting charm and expression of her face triumphing over its costly environment, belongs to our Memling family and tradition with respect to the deification of the human countenance.

M. ROCHEGROSSE IN HIS ATELIER.

Sunlight in Modern French Painting.

(*May* 1894).

THE most modern use of sunlight on canvas is to be seen in the "Chevalier aux Fleurs" of M. Rochegrosse at the Champs-Elysées. His young, armoured, Wagnerian knight stands in the field which dazzles with bold and brilliant flowers. Some of the flowers nearest him have evolved into nymphs seeking to caress his notice. The sky is a cool blue in the distance, and a warm sunlight is playing in the foreground. The treatment of this subject is most daring and difficult, and suggests the attempt to sketch, in a paragraph or two, the evolution in France of the art of this painter.

The French Romantic school, in so far as it reflected the Middle Ages, enveloped itself in twilights, penumbras, darknesses. The Christian God was associated by Victor Hugo with these effects, and partook of the nature of the deities of the northern mythology in their lowering

welkin. His worship of God was something penetrating upward through the clouds—something born particularly of the night. A stream of celestial light conducted through the *chiaros-curos* of mortal life, is a truly Christian representation of faith, and is most familiar to us as seen in Rembrandt's masterpieces.

But the mediæval phase of French Romanticism had a counterbalance in the Oriental phase, wherein were reproduced broad daylights and bright equatorial scenes. This was a love for the sun-bathed Infinite: a hint of the eastern solar cults—of the Buddhistic absorption of worshippers in white mosques into the white expanses of some heliac Nirvana.

To confine our notice to the development of the successive fashions in sunlight, which began by being Oriental sunlight, and has ended by being of our own clime. The attention to it may be traced through the Parnassian school, where it received something of the decorative sense as, for instance, in the verse of Leconte de Lisle. The Realists brought us into somewhat closer acquaintance with it. So Manet fell to observing the sun's rays in his garden, and commenced to bathe canvases with them. It was mere light treated for itself alone, thoroughly disseminating between leaves and colours—the

ever-pervading, naked sunshine stripped of every academic, religious, or ulterior signification, since the Realists were snatching away all that. He thus developed from the bosom of the Realistic school into an Impressionist, for the fundamental aim of Impressionism is the observation of living light: it means the study of vibrant light on all sorts of surfaces and across all length of space.

This was one stage or state of French Impressionism: the getting of things out of doors into the animate air, and painting them there. What has never been attempted before our epoch is the painting of the nude *en plein air*. And this is the startling and strong effect in the canvas of M. Rochegrosse. The nude here reflects the warmed and unwarmed light from all sides like a mirror, and one feels the *coolness* of the shadows—a novel sensation in painting. The nude reflects the cool, blue light from the skies, and shows it pervaded by a warm sunlight. It reflects, also, the warmth and the flower-colour from below.

One quickly understands how there opens up here an elysian domain, where the nude softens and gives expression and plastic charm to sunlight, and where sunlight, in its turn, gives a wholesome, poetic beauty to the nude, as fresh and pure and delightful as the thought of

Nausicaä by the sea in the white gleam of a Greek mythological day. When this cult of the real air is directed across space, the full effects of intervening atmospheres of course come into play, and, as a result, we have the canvases which literally pulsate and swim in ether. In this way imagination, emotion, poetry are lent to themes, and thus Realism yields to, or weds, Idealism. Under this aspect, Impressionism may be defined as a Realistic study applied at long range. It is Idealistic because it is soft, sweet, and soothing, being far removed from the brutalities and the unpoetical motives of the parent school.

In these close, but poetic, observations of light either near at hand or at a distance, its divisions of tones become noteworthy, and are reproduced, as we all know, by the dotting scheme, or *pointillisme.* Naturally, like any new conceptions of colour, *pointillisme* runs, in some phases, into excesses, and fine sport is made of its leopard-spotted canvases. Yet a beautiful truth lies in its principles and methods, for there are divisions of sunshine in nature, and the only way to represent them is, doubtless, by some system of dots.

One may look with interest even at the so-ca led Neo-Impressionistic pictures, if he will

bear in mind that they should be regarded as experiments in a new field rather than as paintings which one should like to hang in his drawing-room. The Neo-Impressionistic painter gives himself up exclusively to the divisions of tones. Take a vivid prismatic day-scene in Venice. The dotted scheme certainly brings out, in ways apparently impossible to imitate, the varying spaces, corners, nooks of light, all opening into each other, and forming, as it were, the airy compartments and courts of the vast temple or mansion of sunlight. It is not difficult, perhaps, for many of us to fancy what pleasant expanses and layers light, in this manner, may be pictured as containing—now, a tiny bright niche, now a little green recess, now a purple alley leading away—all side by side; and composing an *airscape:* a view embraced in the very air itself. This offers a lovely and novel realm, and one which has been scarcely possible to any generation before ours, for we greatly excel in all scientific and artistic uses of sunlight.

OPERA AND THEATRE.

Little Souvenirs of Bizet.

It was a delightful American lady who used to tell us of Bizet June evenings in her salon on the crown of the Champs-Elysées, and was wont to intersperse our entertainment with impetuous excursions to the piano to dash off some strain of "Carmen." Educated in Europe, and particularly in Paris, she displayed such a mixture of French elegance and Spanish fire, that some one remarked on one occasion: "I know now where Bizet got his 'Carmen'—he got it from his third pupil!"—for his "Carmen," every one knows, does not stop with that of Mérimée.

The dim illumination of the room would seem as if murderously masked by the obfuscated almagra-coloured lights here and there; and one thought of these warm blood-spots—of Carmen's heart-throbs poignarded, or of a toreador clumsily gored. The great windows would be flung open, and the air would feel thick with the passion of our theme, as we vied with each other in emphasising our enthusiasm for Bizet's masterpiece.

One would point out that, though Bizet was the first composer to put a popular type of the Spanish temperament into unfading music, full of vital colour, he had nothing but French blood in his veins, and had never been in Spain, showing that a Frenchman is, after all, not inexorably denied the genius for exotic lands. Another would tell us that he had often followed through the scores of "Carmen" at the Opéra-Comique, to note the weak and false pages and passages, and had found so few that were not effectively true to the subject, that he believed "Carmen" to be one of the most perfect of operas—far superior to "Mignon"—from the standpoint of continuous relevant interest. Another would say that the very first motive in Carmen—that of the opening chorus—lifts the skirts of the opera at once above all that is coarse or banal in the subject, and shows how Bizet could give a piquant style to all that he touched. And another would remark that the triumph of "Carmen" is to be explained by the masterful way in which it combines Spanish *fougue* with French refinement and distinction.

Doubtless you, too, are a lover of "Carmen," and are as curious as were we to get a glimpse of the man Bizet, since Marmontel, Galabert, and even Pigot have written little of him. So,

without prelude or exercise, I score here in an informal key some fragments of our hostess's impromptus about him.

"Let me see! Was it in '72 or '73? It must have been '73, for I was twelve years old—1861 and twelve—yes, '73. I remember I was twelve, for I was just then the pride of our family—*enfant prodige*—because I could play Dussek's 'Twelfth Concerto.' We had come from the Isle of Wight, and had taken apartments in the Faubourg Saint Germain for a long stay. My sister and I were to finish our education here. A Russian family and our people had been renting a villa together in the Isle of Wight, and both households were to sojourn in Paris.

"Our friends belonged to the nobility, and had two children—a girl and a boy—Elcko and Alexieff. Alexieff and I fell in love with each other, and became engaged a year later, when I was thirteen. Every day or two he would be saying seriously out loud before any one: 'Mademoiselle, I am going to marry you, am I not?' And I would respond faithfully and innocently: 'Certainement, j'y compte toujours.' But when our romance was finally laid before the Tzar, he would not sanction the marriage unless I joined the Greek Church. Mother would not consent to that, and that's how I missed being a

princess. Alexieff is to-day Governor of ——, Russia, one of the greatest of the Tzar's officials.

"M. Bizet only had two pupils then, my friend and another Russian girl, a sister of the celebrated General S——. She is a famous princess nowadays. M. Bizet did not seem to want pupils, and only took those two because they interested him. Mamma was very anxious that I should take lessons of him, so my friend got his permission to let me go with her one day and play before him. I remember it as if it were yesterday. I was so frightened I didn't see a key from beginning to end. But I had been pretty severely put to it down at the Conservatory of Lausanne. It had quite a reputation in those days, and then too I played my Dussek 'Concerto,' and that happened to be a great favourite of M. Bizet. He had won his *prix de Rome* on it.

"He appeared to be somewhat surprised to see a child—I was not yet even a little 'cornette au bout d'un cotillon,' as Musset would say—tackling that Concerto under such refrigerant circumstances. When I had finished, he said he thought I had done very bravely with it. Mamma asked him if he would take me. He gave an impetuous toss of his head, with an 'Ah!' as if annoyed by such a question. 'Oh,

well, I'll try her for a while ; you know I haven't much patience with pupils.' And that's how I became his third pupil, for he had no one but us —three girls—during the last two years of his life.

" At first he used to come to our place. They were half-hour lessons and 20 francs. He was supposed to come at three o'clock. You never saw a more irregular man. We would wait, wait, wait ; and I was always glad if I thought he was not coming, for I was afraid of him, and naturally dreaded the severe lessons. Not that he ever scolded, but the way he would look at you through those eyeglasses ! Our apartments had several rooms strung along one after the other. When M. Bizet arrived, he would often have to knock at all the doors and hunt us up, for sometimes it would happen that everybody would be here and there and nowhere, and my sister and I would be hanging out of the balcony at the end room of the suite, I revelling in the prospect of having no lesson. One day he became impatient at finding no one, and we heard him stop in the room adjoining the one where we were, and rap on the floor with his cane, exclaiming : ' Est-ce qu'on m'entend ? Qu'est-ce-que je viens faire ici ? Est-ce qu'on croit que j'ai du temps à gaspiller comme çà !'

"And of all the absent-minded persons! He was not conscious of time, place, anybody, or anything but music and *petits fours* at four o'clock. He was always dreaming; up in the clouds—*loin.* He would usually go away and leave something in the room—often left on the piano the banknotes that mamma had paid him; always forgot his overcoat on the rack in the hall, and once in a while the maid would run after him with his hat. He did not appear to relish the idea of receiving pay; apparently disliked to handle money or think of it; treated my lessons as if they were a favour to us. Yes, an ideal artist to the tip of his fingers, to the ends of his hair; hating the material, prosaic world; always keyed up to the last notch in a realm of his own. He never seemed to realise that I existed in flesh and blood; scarcely ever looked at me or touched me; could not have told whether I was blond or dark. I was merely a sort of concept taking a music lesson! He was as economical of his compliments as, I imagine, Saint Saëns is; always left me feeling that no one could be doing more wretchedly; that I was utterly stupid, hopeless. Once in a great while, though, he would say: 'Pas mal, pas trop mal,' and then I felt elated.

"I was afraid of him; yes, but then I was

over my head in love with the man too—he was so handsome. The result was, of course, that I could never play my best before him. I would practise and work over my lessons, and they were hard ones. Think of Chopin's 'Second Scherzo' all at a clip, fifteen or twenty pages—yes, here it is, sixteen pages! I would think my lesson was going to be perfect, and then when he would come in, in his handsome, restless way, it was all up with my playing for the day. I was not unconscious that I was considered quite a good-looking girl—old for my age—looking nearer twenty than twelve. I had a wealth of chestnut hair reaching to my ankles. It somewhat offended my pride—grieved me not a little—to see that M. Bizet took no notice of me, while my singing teacher, an Italian, was always holding my hands and kissing them, and proposing all kinds of delicious romances to me. M. Bizet considered me a child. He apparently liked mamma very much. She was a beautiful woman, with a tasteful, *distingué* way which probably interested him. He always seemed to want to talk with her, and frequently would ask: 'Est-ce qu'on ne voit pas madame aujourd'hui?'

"He was as uneasy as a lion in a cage during the lesson; moved about the room, sitting down and getting right up again, looking everywhere

but at the piano. I often thought he was paying no attention to my playing, and sometimes I would begin to grow careless, and make little slips in fingering, and then he would say savagely: 'Je ne dors pas! Je ne dors pas!' It has been a marvel to me to this day how he could detect the slightest error in fingering, and be looking at a picture on the other side of the room. He never touched my piano, never played a lesson through for me at our house; said that he did not want to make apes of his pupils.

"Brimful of music, bubbling over with it, as he was every moment, I do not remember that he ever whistled a note, but he hummed. He had no voice—no, not a bit of voice; said that if he had had one, he would have been a great singer. He hummed, always getting tremendously excited when the music became triumphant. When I would come to the crowning passage in Chopin's 'Second Scherzo,' he would become half mad. He would rush up and down the room, crying out to me: 'This is the climax! Throw your whole soul into it! Don't miss a note! Play as if you were saying something!'

"Oh, but I haven't told you how handsome he was. He was very plump and vigorous—a very showy, attractive man, without ever thinking that he was, or seeming to care what his

effect was on other people. He had light brown hair, and a full beard almost russet or reddish-brown. His eyes were dark gray or dark blue. He dressed with extreme care and for his own personal satisfaction. It was one expression of his thoroughly artistic nature, and seemed to him as natural a need as any other. There was not a hint of a dandy about him. He did not act as if he were conscious that any one was to look at him.

"He wore the finest linen I ever saw. His gloves were *gants de Suède*—ladies' gloves—very long, soft, light brown, with no buttons. And when he would come in and strip off his gloves, throw them on the piano, and reveal those beautiful hands! They were hands of shell—the palms all shelvy, with pearly layers of flesh and bluish traceries between. They were chubby, white, soft—not large; he always said one must have large hands for the piano. He seemed proud of them, and careful as a rule to keep them covered up—gloved. He had a lovely complexion—pink and white. But with all his dreaminess—his nonchalant, artistic temperament—he did not impress one at all as being an ethereal person. He was too healthy, too thoroughly rammed with life, for that.

"And what a gormand for sweets! He was

crazy for bonbons, cakes, *friandises.* He always had *petits fours* at four o'clock. He was everywhere and at all times stuffing himself with confectionery. As soon as he saw the bonbon dish at our house, he would make for it and eat what there was in it. He once nearly lost his life when indulging his sweet tooth. There used to be a *patisserie*—very likely it's there yet—on the corner of the boulevard right across from the old Opéra-Comique—Place Boïeldieu. M. Bizet was there one day when the ceiling suddenly fell in, or a part of it. I think one or two persons were killed. He barely escaped, for a great piece of the plaster struck him on the shoulder, just missing his head.

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"After about a year, M. Bizet said one day: 'I am too busy to be giving lessons. If you are to keep on, you will have to come *chez moi* hereafter." And so I went regularly to his apartment in the Rue Saint Georges. M. Bizet did not appear to have money, but Madame Bizet had. She was the daughter—the second daughter, I think—of Halévy, the composer. Their apartment was on the third floor—very

artistic, with pictures and bronzes. I remember particularly the heavy *portières* with deep fringes.

"At home M. Bizet seemed a different man. When he was *chez nous*, he was ill at ease—*gêné*—evidently annoyed, displeased at the thought of giving lessons, so he rarely stayed longer than the half-hour. *Chez lui* he seemed glad to see us, and wanted to visit, especially when mamma happened to go with us. He would frequently be half the afternoon giving me my half-hour. He talked, showed his pictures, and would bring in his beautiful baby. He was very proud of it. Madame Bizet would almost always come in, and altogether it was very hospitable—neighbourly.

"Here he was interested, enthusiastic—seemed to have a wealth of leisure, and made us feel as if no one was in a hurry or had anything important to do; and still he worked to excess as everyone knew. Here we discovered, too, how he loved to play the piano. He would play this and that piece, and was apparently very fond of matching his hands against the cold, white ivory of the key-board. He was a pianist of the highest order—superb and brilliant, full of sentiment—*entrain*, fire—spontaneous, colourful, yet having all the technique and precision of the Conservatoire.

"This was in the salon—I took my lessons there. His studio was adjoining, and he had in it a piano and a little pipe organ. Once he had me sing Gounod's 'Ave Maria,' and he accompanied on the organ. Sometimes he would excuse himself during the lesson, and go in to the piano in the studio, close the door, and work over some strain that would be running in his head. This proved to be 'Carmen.' He was full of the airs of 'Carmen' at this time, so I heard most of them sooner than almost anyone, but of course I did not know what they were. We only knew he was at work on an opera. He would hum the melodies and develop them on the piano. I recall particularly the toreador song, and—

'Jirai danser la séguidille,
Et boire du Manzinilla!'

"Oh, how he threw his soul into all these strains! Yet he did not appear to harbour any illusions about the fate of the opera, for one day some one asked him, 'Well, do you think your new opera is going to be a success?' 'Grand Dieu, no!' replied M. Bizet, with an impatience which revealed the deep undercurrent of sadness and disappointment within him; 'it will fall flat like the others,' or words to that effect. He was

really a sad man in spite of all his vigour, robustness, and love of music. He had been deeply wounded by the critics and the public. He felt that people persisted in misinterpreting his art —in sacrificing him on the national altar of race prejudice. He was accused of being Wagnerian. Whether the failure of 'Carmen' at the Opéra-Comique hastened his death, I cannot say. It was given the third of March, and he died the third of June 1875. At any rate, he was putting his full energy into it, and giving it scrupulously the best within him. You know that Carmen's *chanson d'entrée* was rewritten or remade thirteen times!

"It was in March that I last saw him. Mother had suddenly died, and we were all torn up and being bundled off to America. My sister and I were on the boulevard near the Madeleine with the governess one afternoon, and we happened to meet him. It must have been in the last days of March, for I remember we were to sail April second. He stopped, patted my sister on the back, took us both by the hands. He seemed just the same—as well as ever. Of course I was too young to know about the 'Carmen' fiasco, and then we were having so much grief and trouble of our own. This was the first time he ever appeared to take any notice of me. I was

wearing my first long dress, and he remarked it. He looked at me and said, 'Tiens! la petite va être très jolie.'

"We were astounded to hear a few weeks later of his death—and it happens that mother's tomb looks right down over his at Père-Lachaise."

Music.

THE Académie nationale de musique is by no means the profound pleasure to me that I wish it were. The depressed form of the costly pile offers fitting plastic shape to the vague disappointment which comes over me whenever I think of the Grand Opéra, or look at it from my window. The structure is like a magnificent beetle partly stepped on. It is a glorious thing of beauty quashed out at the sides. And still the edifice gives me more satisfaction than I receive from the average opera which one hears within its gilded precincts. The whole institution, from first to last, is for the eyes, not for the ears. One goes there to see rather than to hear.

The elegant auditorium is an obstinate enemy of music. It deadens, kills sound. Some one remarked to a certain Abbé that the room was deaf—the French term for bad acoustics. The Abbé, who happened to detest French melodies, responded, "How happy it must be!" It takes the *timbre* out of the voices, and reduces the

volume of the harmony to such a degree that often you think you are listening through a théâtrophone. The orchestra is one of the largest and finest in Europe, yet it never rises up and overpowers you. A German orchestra would find its soul and enthusiasm unechoed and discouraged by such heavy golden galleries, and would feel as if it were playing in a luxurious deaf and dumb asylum.

Of course a French band never can make so much sumptuous thunder and clang as a Teutonic band. It is not in the race. Noise is not a synonym of music in France. One always remarks the effeminate delicacy and faintness of the selections and renderings of the bands in the parks of Paris. Apparently, they merely display big instruments in order to show what a small blast they can make with them. The Garde Républicaine exhibit the most polished and precise execution imaginable, but they greatly lack in sweep and power. They are quite unable to get into the capacious and tremendous spirit of Wagner. You are distressed to hear them perform, for instance, the Spinning Song of the "Flying Dutchman." Instead of swaying you in its spacious and misty circles of dreamy sentiment, they jolt the strain up and down in a neat, dry trot.

One finds difficulty, then, in falling desperately in love with grand opera in the French capital. The Académie nationale de musique seems to me, on the whole, the most palatial attempt to propagate *ennui* that exists. Nothing has been seen like it since Nero's Golden House. How different grand opera is in Germany! There you dwell in Valhalla, and fight, in company with the orchestra and the singers and the audience, the battles of justice and virtue, and tremble for an hour at a stretch in the divine ecstacies of some *Götterdämmerung.* Famished and exhausted with such epic combat and celestial delight, you are far from finding it incongruous when, at the end of the second act, the angelic German grandma whom you are with gets out her little bundle of congested cheese and strangulated sausages, and insists on sharing it with you.

The Opéra-Comique in Paris — ah, that's another matter! Here Paris excels. One may say that the world would not be blessed with "comic opera" were it not for the French. While Germany has given in this line comparatively little of enduring value, France has produced "La Dame Blanche," "Mireille," "Mignon," "Carmen," and then a score of famous comic operettas—the "Chimes of Nor-

mandy," the "Mascotte," "Miss Helyett," to say nothing of "Offenbach."

Among the French men of music who are in their prime, Saint-Saëns appears to be the most important. He is the greatest savant among them, being a skilled master of music as a science—an intellectual musician who furnishes a cerebral treat. He has not Gounod's gift of melody. Take his "Rouet d'Omphale" as an instance of this fact. It is one of his most popular numbers. As a mental conception it is ingenious, and possesses the most inviting possibilities. And he gets much out of it; but just when you think you are going to succumb to the spell of the delightful air and accompaniment, the air is lost to touch. The picturesque sound of the *rouet* spins in and out, and tantalises you in vain with the feeling that it will surely be for ever wedded the next instant to the resistless and immortal melody which is hovering about the composer's altar.

Quite different from the usual style of Saint-Saëns is his successful opera "Samson and Dalila," one of his early works. It is full of sentimental colouring. I happened to hear him bring out his "Hymne à Victor Hugo," at the Trocadéro in 1884. An orchestra, a chorus, and a pipe organ joined in the execution, and Saint-Saëns

accompanied on the piano. The occasion was unique, for Victor Hugo looked on. I could just see his white head in the depths of a box. At the close of the "Hymne" the audience rose and gave voice to the applause by shouting, "Hugo! Hugo!" But he would not come forward in his *loge* and acknowledge the salutations. The "Hymne" was repeated. As the last note echoed forth, the enthusiasm was again assuming proportions when it was discovered that the great poet had disappeared.

Massenet is very clever, and composes now and then a beautiful number. His "Manon" at the Opéra-Comique is taking a worthy rank. His grand operas are not long-lived. When I was in Paris ten years ago, I fancied that Godard would make an enviable mark. He has not developed into a *nature*, and won a public, although he has written some good music.

If the orchestra is the national expression in music in Germany, the piano holds that honour in France. The French language is the piano among languages. Its ever-recurring *saccadé* note, its delicate brilliancy and precision, its inexpansiveness, its murmur of *ennui* constantly being dashed up in sparkling jets of gaiety—all this characterises the *clavier*. The French are the *Ewig-Weibliche* represented in

a whole race. The eternal feminine is embodied also in the piano. Thus it is natural you think of Paris when you see one, and long for Germany when you hear an orchestra.

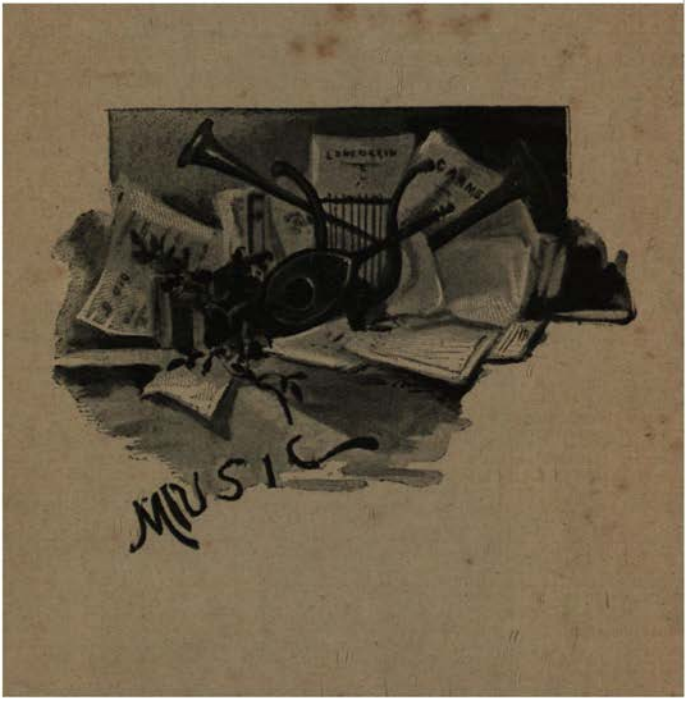
And there is another reason for this association of the piano with Paris—Chopin. When one strolls about in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, he is always wondering which of the hotels Chopin was wont to slip into on gray afternoons, and play to the violet eyes of rare, heartsick countesses, who lost themselves in desolate ecstacies among the delicious traceries and lonely arabesques of his reveries.

They tell us that the world will only know one player of Chopin—Chopin himself. It seems fitting that Madame Sophie Menter, for instance, should render Rubinstein so often—that proud, sad, court music suited to a cold, imperial salon in some Winter Palace. And other composers may easily find interpreters adapted for them by nature. But an evening of Chopin, with even Madame Essipoff at the piano, is far from satisfactory. She is too heavy and stolid, notwithstanding the fact that her fingers plunge through the rich, velvet waves of sound in an impeccable action. This is not letting your hands trail over into the ripples of Chopin's caressing sensibility and melancholy.

Von Bulow played Chopin too dryly, sharply, precisely. And then when I heard him he had a drop on the end of his nose. *Ma foi!* that drop glistening in the lights with the apparent dimensions of the Kohinoor! When one is listening to such pages as the "Nocturne in C sharp minor," he prays to be delivered from all side issues however glittering they may be. There used to be a pianist at the court in Dresden who made a specialty of Chopin. I forget his name. He possessed many of the necessary characteristics. He had a frail and inconsolable touch, and something of reverie in his execution. He was a little, stoop-shouldered man, and apparently a *poitrinaire.* Still his playing lacked a certain distinction, for Chopin's melancholy was never commonplace. It is strange that there appears to be no French pianist who has a reputation in connection with the piano-king of the salon.

Woman — not love, but the adoration of woman—is the great theme of modern French music. Her grace and fragility tempt its unremitting courtesy and praise; her charm is reflected in almost all its partitions. Nature in its various demonstrative phases, epic-geared legends, the master passions, religion, domesticity, democracy, each and all pale into insignificance when contrasted with Woman—the ideal woman

of the salon, of the reception gallery, of the theatre *loge*—as the most felicitous source of inspiration of Parisian melody and harmony. For making her presence exquisitely felt as a refined and distinguished motive, French music of our epoch is incomparable.



Mademoiselle Mars.

(*July* 1894.)

It is rare, even in Paris, that one happens upon a cluster of houses once so famously inhabited as that to be found in the short Rue de la Tour des Dames by the Trinité. Think of Talma at No. 9, Paul Delaroche at No. 5, Mademoiselle Duchesnois at No. 3, and Mademoiselle Mars at No. 1! Was it merely an accidental juxtaposition? No! these noted people were admirers of each other, and wished to live side by side.

To state the circumstance a little more fully, Mademoiselle Mars adored Talma, and Delaroche adored Mademoiselle Mars, and was to have been seen one evening rushing into her *loge*, kneeling at her feet, and covering her hands wildly with kisses in the expression of his enthusiasm over her interpretation of some scene. Mademoiselle Duchesnois, the tragédienne, was also passionately fond of Mademoiselle Mars; but the very day the latter closed the

contract for the purchase of the hotel at No. 1 the two friends had a falling out, and never, so far as history recounts, fell in together again.

You may remember that amusing dinner which Mademoiselle Duchesnois gave here to Victor Hugo, who was then about twenty, and just entering the portals of glory. Madame Sophie Gay, Mademoiselle Leverd the comédienne, and the poet Soumet were the other guests. After dessert, they repaired in company to the Opëra-Comique, where the immortal "Maître de Chapelle" of Madame Gay and Paër was being sung for the first time. The two actresses, Duchesnois and Leverd, placed the young Hugo—grave, timid, and disposed to become severely religious—between them at dinner and in the *loge*, and during the whole evening skilfully indulged him, much to his solemn discomfort, with a hundred evanescent endearments.

One who loves to linger around historic houses in Paris finds this quarter by the Trinité especially rich in these treasures; for, besides the renowned dwellers in the Tour des Dames, there were Carle and Horace Vernet at No. 56 Rue Saint Lazare; Scribe at No. 12 Rue Pigalle; and Mignet at No. 14 Rue d'Aumale, with his friend Thiers close by. But of all these drowsy

streets, the Rue de la Tour des Dames is the drowsiest. The blinds of the Talma residence are always hermetically sealed, and the other buildings present to the passer-by an aspect of crocodile indifference. The hotel of Mademoiselle Mars nowadays appears to be the head-quarters of an Algerian railway company, yet it does not seem any the livelier for that. True, her "petit hôtel," as she called it, ranks not among the largest, neither is it of the smallest. It is a plain, two-storey, old-fashioned Paris house, with a pair of Doric pilasters flanking its front door. It is on a side hill, and from one of the upper side windows the signal doubtless was given for the robber who was to commit here one of the greatest thefts of diamonds known to the annals of peerless jewels.

And Mademoiselle Mars? What do we call to mind about her? She was the queen for at least twenty-five years of the comedy boards of Paris. For thirty-eight years she was a conspicuous gem in Thalïa's crown, having achieved her first grand success on the stage in 1803, and having bid adieu to it in 1841. This farewell took the form of a gala representation wherein, at the age of sixty-two, she was seen as Célimène in "Le Misanthrope," and as the Marquise in "Les Fausses Confidences," two rôles which had

been her triumph forty years before. She did not have genius, but she had a royal talent—a talent which made her proud to be thirty years in perfecting the turn of a phrase or a gesture.

Her hotel, however, suggests that we think of the woman rather than of the artist. It was her beauty, womanly accomplishments, and active mind, her taste, her queenly graces, her matchless tongue, her cool strong head, which enabled her to hold such undisputed sway for so long an epoch. She had all the charms to which flesh is heir, even to her thirty-two teeth, "no more and no less." The story is told of a Philadelphia dentist in Paris who declined to receive pay from her for professional services, saying, "You have paid me, Mademoiselle, by affording me the pleasure of beholding the handsomest teeth in the world." The American dentist, it seems, had begun already at that early date to get Europe by the jaw!

The *mots* of Mademoiselle Mars, her doings and adventures, her toilets, her jewels, her opulent existence, were the current gossip of the day for three decades, and every one was making love to her, from Napoleon the Great down to men who were too little to be mentioned. She always remained a Bonapartist, she always remained faithful to Napoleon; and this fact

launched her into many a war which she might have avoided had she been content simply to cry "Vive Molière!" We remember the incident of the Royalist director of the Théâtre Français, who cordially disliked her loyalty to the Empire, and was delighted one day at a chance, as he thought, to put his heel cleverly on her. A part of his name was Papillon (butterfly). Mademoiselle Mars had entered his official room to request a leave of absence. He remarked smilingly, "You can have a leave of absence, dear Mademoiselle—when roses become lilies." "And I," she promptly retorted, "will ask you for another favour—when butterflies become eagles."

Mademoiselle Mars was, like Napoleon, a warrior worthy of her *nom de guerre.* There was a decided mixture of steel in her make-up, and she could thunder, in her woman's way, along every chord of martial ascendency. She could be, if necessary, as "cold as a carafe of orgeat," and she was a tempest when the mood seized her, and those about her could well exclaim, "C'est vraiment du temps de Mars aujourd'hui."

At times she appeared to be carrying on a campaign against all Paris, and whenever, as a result, she seemed on the point of being over-

whelmed and annihilated, she would win the day by a witty word, and become as priceless as ever. Her *esprit* was of the highest strain, since it did not fail her under fire. One evening a large company of royalists came to the theatre for the purpose of making her vociferate "Vive le Roi!" She bantered and coquetted with them from the stage, and was as persistent in refusing to satisfy their demands as they were in their noisy demonstrations. At length, seeing that the disturbance was swelling in proportions, she advanced to the footlights, and said: "You wish me to cry, 'Vive le Roi!' Eh bien, voilà I have done it!" and the agitators were thus deftly silenced. Such conquests are peculiarly complete and satisfactory, for one's belligerent capacities have been fully shown therein, and one's *bon mot* has saved him both from the danger of a defeat, and from the fear of any revengeful desires which a fought-out victory would have entailed.

However, it was not by any means to Mars that our heroine was always sacrificing in this militant manner, for one of her mottoes was: "With a fan in the hand, a woman is stronger than a man with a sword." She could display in ample measure all the gentler arts of her sex, and could effectually conceal her claws beneath

a caressing velvet. Her heart never spilled over to an alarming extent; it was held dryly in check by her energetic brain. Her *mot*—"One only gives the hand when he gives the heart"—was not to be interpreted literally in her instance, and one understands quickly how far she was from any modern sentimentality, notwithstanding her cult of violets, when he learns that her favourite author apparently was Saint-Simon. She was fond of him because there was nothing Romanesque in his pages.

We recall another item. Victor Hugo told us that there were no letters of invitation to her funeral, owing to the difficulty of saying: "Mademoiselle Mars is dead. Her son has the honour to inform you of the fact."

In rehearsing these little entrances and exits of French social history, one falls to moralizing on the character and personal career of Mademoiselle Mars, as viewed in the light of our day. Her reign of the head, her dryness of the heart, her weapon of *esprit*, her social attractions, and her eminently courtly bearing, attach her to the era when the court and the salon were in full *éclat*—that is to say, to the *ancien régime*. To speak in general terms, Mademoiselle Mars is to the realm of French comedy what Madame de Sévigné is to the realm of French letters. Both

celebrities are destined to be for ever notable as sovereign representatives in France of the influence of the court and of the social spirit.

Women have written epistles which surpass those of Madame de Sévigné in a score of senses, and yet hers seem, and will ever seem, the paragon of a woman's letters. And why? Since they unfold the old traditional conception of what an ideal lady—a marquise, for instance—should be: one who could say the merest anything elegantly in a hundred different ways; one who loved the slightest passing events of life, its vanities, its nothings, and caused them to appear so attractive and essential; one who was so everlastingly a woman, delicate, dependent, to be protected, to be *chateaued*, to be courted, knowing only how to exist gracefully, and knowing only how to take in the world inconsequentially in delightful, corsaged glimpses.

Mademoiselle Mars, descending as it were from the same *régime* of court and salon, embodied the old, original conception of the comédienne. Her social ease and her *esprit* made her, more than any comédienne of any period, the true and effective incarnation of the court and salon in the theatre. Not only is the salon a court in miniature, but the high comedy stage is a salon seen by the common public. The salon and high

comedy in Paris were outgrowths of the court, and for these three things, as the expression of the social spirit, France has ever reigned supreme. It is because Mademoiselle Mars somehow personified all three more adequately than any actress, and was, therefore, a great woman as well as a great *artiste*, that she must remain the most celebrated of comédiennes in the initial and organic French meaning of the word and its associations. Hence it is with profound truth that Duret's statue in the vestibule of the Comédie Français represents her as if she were an eighteenth-century court lady in a salon. She was with her tongue what Madame de Sévigné was with her pen. Both were *grandes dames.*

Nevertheless, Mademoiselle Mars is not wholly to be excluded from our century. Her career presents another aspect. She exemplifies an ideal which approaches nearer to us than that offered by the *ancien régime.* It may, indeed, be called the modern ideal, namely, that a woman should be prepared and expect to work out her own destiny freely and independently like a man. Being no one, and beginning with nothing, Mademoiselle Mars, by means of sheer diligence and a clear intelligence, won her laurels and held her place in the open contest of life. Mundane and materialistic, neither better nor worse than her

time, warfaring, executing flank movements, hot here, cold there, she manipulated her varied charms and arts as expertly as Napoleon managed his battalions on a field of battle. She was a host in herself alone, seeking odds of neither man nor woman. Surrounded, in the dazzling light of publicity, by suitors, friends, enemies, she was master of them and of herself, and triumphed over everything except anility—much stronger, more clever, more resourceful, more brilliant, more diversified in her talents than the Madame de Sévigné type of woman. She was, in this view, a Napoleon in petticoats; and just as Napoleon was the connecting-link between the *ancien régime* and modern French democracy, so Mademoiselle Mars was the connecting-link between the old and the new type of the Parisian actress.

To appreciate this fully, and to observe at a glance that Mademoiselle Mars belongs to this century only in so far as she was a Bonapartist —that she was the *ancien régime Bonapartised*— we have but to remark that she was not Bohemian like Rachel, nor Romantic like Madame Dorval, nor *bourgeoise*. For, to put it crudely, French Romanticism, which succeeded in a way in France as the dominant or prominent fashion to Bonapartism and the Empire mode, was made up not

only of the Romantic, but of the Bohemian and of the *bourgeoise.*

It is true that Mademoiselle Mars created Doña Sol in "Hernani," yet it was simply because she had the right to claim the part by reason of her long and commanding services. There was nothing of the Doña Sol about her. She was not to be becomingly effaced into such a weak rôle of modern romantic sentimentality as this. And, in reality, she and Victor Hugo quarrelled during the whole series of rehearsals—she insisted on waving aloft the old white classic standards of France, and he insisting on flaunting the red flag of revolution in the air. He was twenty-eight years old. She was fifty-one, and impersonating a character of seventeen!

As a logical example of what we are saying of Mademoiselle Mars and our present epoch, there is not an actress in Paris in our day who reflects the Mars tradition, and whose career can be likened to hers. Styles in actresses have changed with everything else in our century. Mademoiselle Mars is merely a reminiscence of the era in France which ended when the Romantic school got complete sway. I was asking, only this week, a charming young *sociétqire* of the Théâtre Français if she had a cult of the memory and

personal art of Mademoiselle Mars, and she seemed to know little of her. And still this *sociétaire* is the successor of Mademoiselle Mars —in the latter's special rôles—those of the eighteenth century, and of Molière and Regnard. Mesdames Bernhardt, Bartet, Reichenberg, Réjane, Hading—none of them can be thought of as a Mademoiselle Mars. They are the product of nineteenth-century motives and environments.

It does not need to be said that, as the aristocracy prevailed under the *ancien régime*, the *bourgeoisie* prevails in the post-Napoleon France. *Bourgeois* qualities, to speak comparatively, characterise art, literature, the government, and life in France in our period; and, therefore, *vis-à-vis* Mademoiselle Mars and the tradition she represented, the Paris actress to-day is, on the whole, *bourgeoise*. She lives, and desires to live, domestically, economically; and as *bourgeois* stands for moral among the French, we may safely infer that the modern Paris actress either offers a reproachless career, or one which, compared with the typical career of her old-time predecessors, is less reproachable from the standpoint of being morally or statutably *comme il faut*. As the influence of the aristocracy continues to dwindle in France, and as that of the

bourgeoisie continues to increase, more women enter the theatrical profession—not as a high grade of courtesanship in effect, but as an honourable and elevating vocation — one in which they can lead successfully self-respecting lives.

Phèdre—Rachel and Bernhardt.

RACHEL in "Phèdre" is what French genius places beside our Bettertons and Booths and Irvings in "Hamlet." And who can say that, for unadulterated tragedy fit for the stage, this rôle of Rachel's did not surpass all other tragic stage performances known to the modern era?

Indeed, we concur in the ranking of Rachel as incomparable; still, we ask our patriotic selves, Who of our Anglo-American race could ever become so crazed with alien intoxicants as to admit, even if he believed it, that our "Hamlet" is not the greatest of tragedies? Sooner or later in France one is apt to try to pierce into the bowels of this question, and to satisfy himself, forgetting as far as he can the notion of national bias and of the personal equation, that the French, with their Racines and Corneilles, are not entirely left behind in the tragic art. This time had come for me. Madame Bernhardt was to impersonate Phèdre. So the

evening before, I took out Racine and went at "Phèdre" in desperate earnestness, spending a whole night in the throes of the play, and deflouring many pages of white paper with tortuous lucubrations. A whole night!—when Rachel was five years or more learning the rôle!

You remember that famous little midnight meal which Rachel prepared and served on tin plates to Alfred de Musset. It was in May 1839. She was then eighteen, and he was twenty-nine. She had been playing Tancrède at the Français, and, always a *gamine*, had brought Musset home with her to supper. Her diamond necklace and bracelets caromed around on the table with the tin knives and spoons and the salt-cellars.

Very communicative, and in her best Bohemian style, she talked right and left, and told Musset that when she was at the Molière Theatre she had only two pairs of stockings, and had to wash one pair every morning, and hang it horseback on a string across her chamber to dry and be ready for the next day. Cooking, gossiping, moving about, eating—such was Rachel that night—banging the table with her fist, and using pugilistic language whenever the indigestible souvenir of some Philistine critic escaped from her lips. And for dessert—she did not have any—so she read "Phèdre" to Musset. She was

then studying the rôle which she was to play four years later as the triumph of her life.

To return to my theme. By dawn I was in a fine tragic condition, and had developed into the severest of lowering censors, fiercely antique in all directions. I had become rigidly Racinean in all the pure rigidity of the conception. I had learned in my nightly vigil how "Hamlet," as a tragic rôle, could naturally appear to the French wellnigh impossible, or at least impracticable. Let us fancy for a moment an unregenerate French critic punching a huge aperture through its emptiness. Imagine him running on something like this:

"The only thing in 'Hamlet' is the environment. Shakespeare made the play as the schoolboy would have made a cannon: 'You just take a hole,' the boy said, 'and put some bronze around it.' Hamlet is a breath, a shadow, an aperture, with realities about him. You are not interested in him, but in that which surrounds him. It is not his affection that you think of, but Ophelia, the ideal he might have loved. You are not interested in Ophelia, but in the incidental externals and decorative occurrences which attach to her rôle, such as her wreaths of flowers, her death by drowning. Hamlet's conscience smites him, yet you are only conscious

of the form this assumes at the appearance of his father's ghost. Mere child's play! Who wants ghosts on the stage? It shows how, in resorting to infantile absurdities, Shakespeare realised the weakness of his plot.

"Remove the surroundings from Hamlet—his black garb, his discouraged hose, the Elsinore battlements, the night—and there is nothing left for a play suited to the boards. He commences nowhere and ends nowhere. He is a breath of doubt tied in a knot of air. There is no action — an unsurmountable defect in a tragedy. He is the most celebrated How-Not-To-Do-It the world has ever seen. He seems to have succeeded because he disastrously failed. And so with the other characters. They are as unconscious of self as a lady tries to be when she rides a bicycle. They are strange creatures, not understanding themselves, understood by none of us, propelled by mysterious influences and forces which no one has ever pretended to comprehend. And what kind of insane stuff is all this to wreath into a tragedy to be presented before a sensible, intelligent audience? In England, you know, it does not matter particularly, for everybody there is more or less mad, as the 'great Will' himself said." Exit our imaginary French critic.

Now behold the contrast in "Phèdre." Here we must dismiss at once and absolutely all notion of environment. No sceneries, no distracting costumes, no moonlight and music, no side effects enter to pique our curiosity and cater to our romantic fancy. The whole play passes in one colourless spot and set of costumes, in one colourless twenty-four hours, and in one colourless chain of action, according to the Aristotelian unities.

Thus our notice begins to be concentrated on the thesis of the piece. Yet we are not to stop with this. We are also to strip our play of rôles, or give it only one. Racine's Phèdre is not a woman, but an idea. We do not know how she looks nor what she wears. It has never occurred to anyone to ask if she were blond and beautiful. There is not an item which localises or personalises her. The other rôles are mere formalities introduced to accommodate the development of the Phèdre motive.

Our thought is then fixed solely and solidly, with the utmost intensity, on the theme of the tragedy, namely, the study of an adulterous passion. It is an essay played. Racine clothes it in a feminine form for obvious reasons, still in such a way as to keep our attention on the naked passion itself, and not on any accidents or

incidents of flesh or environment. Then he proceeds in five acts to put this inextinguishable desire through five of the supremest trials possible to human conception. This lofty feminine soul-essence, called Phèdre, is to war against the masterful love for one other than her lawful spouse, who is divined to be lost at sea. Fatality has attached this accursed enemy to her, and forces her to fight out the hopeless struggle alone, with no gleam of faith, with no help of deity or man.

The five crises, or phases, of her passion are these. In Act I. she is led to confess her adulterous love to her maid.—First crisis. In Act II. she reveals it to the man she loves, and implores him to destroy her in her ignominy. —Crisis of despair. In Act III. she agitates her fury in her sense of abasement, and resolves to consummate her marriage at any cost. The announcement of her consort's landing arrives, and opens new arenas of horror to her.—Crisis of defiant rage afterward, weakening into a pitiable terror. In Act IV. she is informed that the one she loves, loves another.—Crisis of jealousy. In Act V. she is informed of his horrible end, and, dying herself, confesses her guilt to her consort.—Crisis of death.

This is the rôle—the passion—of "Phèdre." It

is nothing but action forward. The audience is in full possession of all the facts and motives, and is always left in a rational and luminous state. There are no fragments, no misunderstandings, no obscurities, no shifting philosophy. The play has no unrealities of imagination, and attempts no excursions into the realm of spirits and the unknown. It is apterous, substantial, concrete.

Now give two great, gleaming dark eyes to this terrific passion, and, too, a look of dead white terror; let it make seething sounds with a powerful voice that haunts you ever after in the night; lengthen it with a dress train that lashes rage into the ground; contort it in the sinuousities of an angry serpent, so that when it darts toward you from the foot to the front of the stage, you instinctively start from your seat to dodge for your life—and you have Rachel in Phèdre! A python, a pythoness—the unadulterated Racinean conception—antique, fatalistic, and whipping her poisoned desperation into your very soul. She was ancient tragedy herself, more than mortal and less than divine—an unsexed fury, embodying a generalised idea of earthly weakness: with her strength and sense of size, the Greek-epic incarnation of Human Passion Bound and Unbound.

I chance each winter to sit next a venerable French lady at the *matinées* at the Français, and she often tells me, between the acts, how Rachel and the other players of that generation handled their rôles. She heard Rachel sing the "Marseillaise" on that memorable occasion; she never saw an actress manage her train with so much effect; and when Rachel used to say to Felix in "Polyeucte," "Je suis chrétienne," the word seemed to express the whole legendary length and concentrated force of Christianity, and to resound through the room like an admonition from heaven.

The greatest Phèdre in our day is Madame Bernhardt. After passing my night with the play, I set off for the Renaissance at noon, thoroughly imbued with the Racinean idea and the Rachel tradition. I was proposing, in my critical humour, to be extremely uncomfortable if Madame Bernhardt swerved an instant from the rôle. But when I found that she had placed at my disposal a capacious *baignoire*, in spite of the fact that every seat in her theatre was occupied, and that my liens upon her notice were fragile indeed, my unlovely, vase-breaking mood dissipated at once into a sweet and airy circumambient, and I sunk back into my indulgent *fauteuil*, prepared to enjoy my-

self, and love all mankind, whether Racinean or not.

To note with pleasure, therefore, the distinguishing traits of the Phèdre of Madame Bernhardt. It is not antique—it is modern. This Phèdre is not an essence, an idea, a thesis. She is a woman, delicate, fawning, cat-like, sentimental, romanesque. She might dote on Chopin, Musset, and Sully Prudhomme. She is a *poitrinaire*, and has a cough that sounds fatefully throughout the tragedy. Tears weave their humid gauzes into her rôle. There is no dry-eyed Rachel here.

Furthermore, the domain of environment is tilled scrupulously by Madame Bernhardt. She induces everything to play with her and for her. Notice the fine cluster of camellias back of her chair. They stand up straight and defiant in the tragic parts, and droop over languidly and amorously in the softer passages. Remark those two red foot-cushions. They square off at each other in battle array during the pugnacious acts, and then, when the curtain rises on a tender scene, they appear to be making love like two turtles.

There is, too, her grace, familiar enough to every one. How she sylphs across the stage, never walking, never marching! Her attitudes

and movements melt into willowy dissolvings. And this grace is wedded to a dreamy, murmuring, almost dainty lyrism, which quivers in the plaintive monotonies of her voice. There is, too, her unrivalled cult of the æsthetic. The acts pass as symphonies in creams and yellows. Colours contrast in unison, and speak rôles of their own in a harmony of sentiment. The bronzed ugliness of her maid sets off her own white fragility and birth. And she, languid, blond, defeated, sways back and dies in the arms of seven black-eyed, black-haired young girls, whose fresh beauty adds a piquant relief to the wanness of a guilty life fading out in sallow despair.

In all these things Madame Bernhardt triumphs, and Rachel had nothing to offer. On the other hand, Madame Bernhardt lays no claim to Rachel's appalling voice, which was as strong and spacious as horror, nor to her truly tragic look and air, ominous of catastrophe, nor to her sexless epic might and sense of expanse—to her gift of seeming a monstrosity.

Madame Bernhardt is not a Greek, nor is she of any past period. No Greek could have loved her any more than a modern man could love a maid of ancient Greece. Such, at least, was the general proposition which some old German philosopher—Fichte, was it not?—thought he

demonstrated. She is the incarnation of the romantic and of the most conspicuous species of the modern *Parisienne.* What fantastic episodes, what wispy toilets, what wasp-belted, fleeting forms of the Frenchwoman are there in our day, but that have been inspired by, or found their prototype in, Madame Bernhardt? It is her figure and style which one sees pictured in every poster in Paris. She has been the Parisian model of this whole toiletted class of woman—a class which belongs to our epoch, and to no other. She was the first, and remains the grandest, *Parisienne* of all this *fin de siècle.*

LOGE DE MLLE. LUDWIG (COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE).

Mademoiselle Ludwig.

(1893-4.)

MANY are the true pleasures for the sojourner in France, and one of them is to remark types which impersonate her various epochs. We come to Paris with French history, life, and art divided more or less distinctly in our minds into several periods. There are the areas of Louis XIV., Louis XV., Louis XVI., Napoleon, and so on. Each reign is signalised by its fashions in architecture, in interior decoration, in dress, in coiffure.

Now we find a piquant and singular delight in discovering a man or a woman who can embody the style and character of one of these epochs; and I know of no one in Paris who does so more charmingly than Mademoiselle Ludwig of the Comédie Française. The period of Louis XV. was natty and feminine. The model of its furniture, with its soft curves, was suggested by the sinuosities of the female bust. The whole reign seemed perfectly summarised in the court

ladies of that day—in the piffy and prinked marquises coquetting in one of those royal Renaissance gardens "in five acts," of which Victor Hugo was always making such Titanic fun. Watteau's gray Finette was an early pattern of it all, and we think of the Lancrets and the Hilaires in the Louvre when we wish to accentuate the area neatly in our fancies.

What a dainty experience, we say to ourselves, if we could be in the company of a Louis XV. marquise for an evening, and see her tartly move about, hear her chatter and laugh, and admire the art with which she is perfumed and bepowdered, and the skill with which she has clarified her complexion with black patches! So I am fond of watching Mademoiselle Ludwig on the boards at the Français. How did it chance that she was born a hundred and fifty years after her time? Does she not feel ill at ease in this so-called prosaic age of the *bourgeois?* Does she not long for mates who are ready to dally and frisk with her in a Lenôtre pleasure-ground? Would she not love to be playing cameo comedies in a little temple of love, or to be flirting in a quincunx, or chasing the echoing frivolities along the ha-ha in some Bourbon park?

The visitor to whom the *concierge* shows Mademoiselle Ludwig's *loge* of a morning is

certain that she misses her epoch somewhat, for the beautiful apartment is in the Louis XV. style, with sculptured and gilded woodwork, and mirrors in the panels. Yet he is more certain that she can entertain him on the stage with her dry prettinesses, with the minute clinkings of her crystal laughter, with her miniature sallies of petulance and *badinage*, with her crimping-iron precision, and her courtly, curl-paper hollowness. You do not care whether she could really love or be loved, since she represents the period of Madame du Deffand, when the heart was dessicated, and existence was merely a battle against *ennui*. In that age, so largely lacking in serious and noble endeavour, the men and women of rank appeared to evolve, in France, from flesh and blood into powder-puffs, pirouetting in a cardboard and green-painted Nature. The country folk around Versailles no doubt believed that the Author of the universe was dressed up in a peruque, and that the Virgin Mary wore a bang.

There were two great adepts at comedy-writing in Paris in the last century—Marivaux and Beaumarchais. Regnard, with his "Allons, saute, Marquis!" belonged to the seventeenth century, and Beaumarchais was rather a part of the revolutionary decade. It is in the effeminate,

affected, grey-ribboned and shoe-pinching comedies of Marivaux that the true aristocratic eighteenth century is embalmed. In them the little Marquis still comes tripping in, and it is still "Allons, saute, Marquis!" but the soubrettes are better educated than their mothers and grandmothers in Molière, and titter forth occasionally such words as "hétéroclite." It is all volatile gallantry and sweet smirkings, and life seems made up of pins, tea-roses, and cream-tarts. As has been pointed out, woman is both the hero and the heroine in Marivaux. Here, as well as in plays like Favart's, Mademoiselle Ludwig is in her element. In Favart's "Les Trois Sultanes" she can dance the stately minuet, put her arms defiantly akimbo, and mock and twitter and flutter about saucily to one's most regal content.

We are told that the latest students of the era preceding that of the Revolution demonstrate that it was not tyranny which destroyed the Bourbon dynasty. Indeed, have we ever thought that the Louis's were tyrants? Louis XV. and his company were only trivial and capricious. Their harmfulness was negative. Nations gradually are getting beyond the idea of being ruled in that fashion. We no longer believe that crimps, lace sleeves, and lavender

insouciance are essential to the best government, and prove the divine right of kings. The Louis XV. epoch produced an alluring art, and no literature is more seductive in its way than the memoirs and correspondence of that time. Yet it cost too much. The world is learning by degrees that national government is largely a plain, homely affair of business. This conception of it does not make possible such enticing histories for the desultory reader, but it gives the common man and the populace more chance and recognition.

The contrast between the ancient court *régime* and that of the Third Republic is brought strikingly to the notice of anyone who happens to be loitering, about four o'clock on a summer day, along the highway leading from Fontainebleau into the forest. You hear the tinkling of small bells. Presently a carriage, with a driver and a footman, passes, and President and Madame Carnot acknowledge your salutations. That is all there is of this equipage of state. Only the bells indicate that it is not the conveyance of some well-to-do citizen of the town.

To return to our theme. Having seen Mademoiselle Ludwig act so frequently her rôles of the last century, I had become possessed of the idea that she was a woman of a certain age,

quick, nervous, scintillating, with a sharp dry tongue that kept your wits curtly poked up, full master of herself, fond of flattery, of course, yet not deceived by it, very mundane and disillusioned, living on the vanities and triumphs of the world, and too shrewd to fall in love or to be loved too seriously.

It was, therefore, not without much timidity that I went to the Avenue Niel for the first time, to offer her my compliments as an humble *habitué* of the Théâtre Français. I was ushered into her little reception room one afternoon at five. The chairs were primly arrayed in white frocks; there were two or three pieces of Trianon furniture; a Bourget novel, with its leaves partly cut, lay on a stand; the walls were hung in yellow. Before long I detected the trace of a violet perfume sifting into the room, and I knew that the marquise, whom I had been so curious to see off the stage, was about to enter. In another moment she was greeting me in a frank and loyal way, with a mixture of accomplished grace and girlish embarrassment which immediately reassured me. I was not slow to remark the harmony that her violet négligée, loosely grouped about her, was proposing to her violet eyes, twinkling in the prettiest of minion-like faces; nor was I slow to enjoy the æsthetic satisfaction of feeling how all

LOGE DE MLLE. LUDWIG (COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE).

this blended deliciously with the yellow of the apartment. It was a quiet thrill within me of gratification at realising something of that artistic life for which we come to Paris, and dream of finding nowhere more than in the tasteful haunts of an actress of the Français.

I explained how I admired her acting, and that I had wished on many occasions to tell her so, but that, however much I always shuddered in committing the crime before the average Parisian, it was doubly revolting to think of guillotining the French language with my sharp American accent in the presence of a *sociétaire*. And we drifted at once into a cordial conversation. She told me how she was attached to her art, and how her existence seemed like a day passed in a *boudoir*—in a *loge*. She was happy to confess that she loved the Louis XV. epoch in particular, and the Marivaux and Favart rôles. She was not very modern, she feared. She was not an Impressionist, and was not incredulous. She had just been reading Bourget. She deemed him too sceptical, and still he was perhaps her preference among contemporary romancers. For her part, she was somewhat "gobeuse."

"And, being of the eighteenth century, you are, of course, not a Republican?" I suggested, trying to slip in the sentence innocently. "Oh,

mais si, I am a Republican—I don't know anything but Republicanism. I am modern, too, in that I adore music—yes, much more than painting, yet I neither sing nor play an instrument. I worship Bizet, Gounod — no, not modern enough for Wagner — I understand nothing 'dans-cette galere.' One reason for it, I suppose, is that I have never been in Germany. I have travelled little—you know we have no leave of absence to speak of at the Français—I have hardly even seen the sea."

Thus she ran on in her violet voice (if ever a voice wore a colour), and confirmed the evident fact that the violet was her flower *de cœur*. Pailleron and Meilhac were disclosed to be her favourite modern rôles: those of "jeune fille libre" (independent young girl), like Suzanne de Villiers in "Le Monde ou l'on s'ennuie"—the Republican girl *à l'Américaine* evolved, as it were, from the youthful Trianon marquise.

I was charmed to discover that Mademoiselle Ludwig was not at all what I expected she would be. She proved to be a very young woman; she was leading here, with her father and sister, as tranquil a life as possible to an actress; and she showed a youthful openness and trustfulness in her elegance of manner—*ingénue* and *grande-dame* formed into a *sociétaire*. She was indeed

a Louis Quinze marquise, slight, *mignarde*, with her puff-box gaiety and her light and easily-awakened laughter, yet free from any suspicion of *marivaudage* or of glinting raillery and frivolity.

One day, a few weeks after my call, I learned that Mademoiselle Ludwig would be pleased to see me that evening in her *loge*. She appeared in the opening piece, and when the curtain had rolled down, I found my way up three of the little flights of stairs which mount to the niches of the players. I followed along the row of names on the doors until I reached her room. The entry was open, and her *loge* was already full of people, who were talking and laughing. As I eddied around the entrance, Mademoiselle Ludwig caught sight of me, and called out: "Entrez, Monsieur!" She was in a youth's costume, for she had been impersonating Colin in "Attendez moi sous l'Orme." I hesitated about wedging in among her admirers, and she came forward. Our intercommunication ended, she asked if she could be of any service to me, fancying that she was under some obligation. "Oh—no!" I said, and drew away, with her violet voice modestly unfolding its "Au revoir, Monsieur" in my ears. I was disappointed at being thus deprived of passing a quiet quarter of an hour here, not de-

lighting so much in what she would say, as in the way in which she would say it. A *sociétaire* in her *loge!*

As I went minutely down the tiny steps in my trifling displeasure, it dawned on me that I was offering a brilliant example of *esprit d'escalier*, since I needed merely to have invented an excuse to chat with her, and she doubtless would have suggested that I return after the bell for *Oedipe Roi* had rung her friends to their seats. *Esprit d'escalier* indeed! The following day I was still inclined to indulge in a vexed mood over my stupidity, when it finally occurred to me that I had only to send up my card the next time she played.

Among Famous Ballet People.

Now and then, when a mood makes work impossible, I set out at noon in quest of adventure and entertainment, often entirely adrift as to destination or direction. I visit some museum for the thirtieth time, or hunt up some acquaintance in South Paris, or take a boat bound for some terrace, pond, or forest alley that I love, or go down to the Café de la Régence and twist my thoughts and legs round a game of chess with some old chess rat who has haunted that resort since the time of Morphy and Musset.

To-day, for diversion, I go under a fine arch, across a court in the rear of an enormous edifice, and into an entry with the word "Théâtre" above it. It is the Grand Opéra. I offer a gesture of recognition to the *concierge*—a jolly fellow who is ever playing pranks—and mount four flights of stairs to the landing bearing the legend :—

LOGES D'ARTISTES.
COIFFEURS.

I fumble through a dark corridor, find my way to a door, and grope along a passage to another door in which a gimlet hole is corseting a ray of light. I hear voices, and rap. "Entrez!" is shouted out, and I open—into a small room where three persons are at *déjeuner*. A handsome young man greets me royally, and every one exchanges a *bonjour*. He places me at the vacant side of the table, and insists that I have not breakfasted.

It is the *loge* of M. Miguel Vazquez, *premier danseur* at the Opéra. He and I once made a little study of the union of physical grace and music, so that we are good friends, and I am favoured with the *entrée* to his *loge*. "You are to come just when you like, and to stay as long you like," he is always saying to me. It is an unpretending *loge*, strewn with ballet music scores, and with check lists for the *danseuses* to sign each day to show that they have been present at their lesson. A big bowie knife hangs on the wall, a violin is reposing on the desk in the corner by the window, and an immense lounge occupies one side of the room and takes up nearly one fourth of the whole space.

M. Vazquez is very hospitable, and usually two or three people slip into breakfast with him.

At my right is Mademoiselle B——, a leading *ballerine.* She is in ballet costume, but is wrapped in a white nubia and a purple opera cape lined with white fur. Great white woollen stockings are drawn up over her legs. Next her sits M. Vazquez, senior, a venerable gentleman of the old school. He was a *danseur* in his youth. His memories run back to Taglioni and the Elsslers. He appeared on the boards with many a famous *danseuse*—Petra Camara, for instance, whom Gautier immortalised in one of his "Emaux et Camées," and who is living still to-day in Madrid.

The repast is being disposed of hurriedly, for it happens that the final rehearsal of "La Korrigane" is on, and a summons to descend to the stage is expected every moment. It is at high noon that the ballet at the Grand Opéra is conjugated in its inflections of *amo, amas, amat.* Meanwhile I am made to venture on the cruise of a cup of coffee, but not without fear and trembling, for I know by experience that this ballet coffee is dangerous enough to make the hair of a buccaneer crisp and curl. The dancers say that it gives them their legs. Soon there is a knock at the door, and an *avertisseur* announces, "You are wanted below." We file down the halls and stairways, and skirt along the *coulisses,*

where I stop while my friends mix in with their comrades on the boards.

Did you ever view a ballet rehearsal in a vast opera house? It is a fairy-like scene when observed from a distant box. The theatre is dark; the stage is dimly lighted. All is bustle and confusion, rejoiced by the cackle of a hundred women perched in groups and rows, or flying hither and thither, and, with their cheese-form jupes, producing the glimmering impression of white moths courting a lamp-illumined obscurity. This time I see the spectacle close at hand. Around me are several women chaperoning the *danseuses*, especially the very young *danseuses*. These tiny maids, proud of their toilets, keep buzzing about us. Everybody, exhibiting one of the most delightful traits of French courtesy, seems unconscious that a stranger is here. The *maître de ballet*, the amiable M. Hansen, is crying out at intervals, "Messieurs, il faut recommencer!—Mesdames, en place, s'il vous plaît!" The *régisseur* is busy calling names and arranging the quadrilles, files, battalions; and when the din becomes too great, he shouts, "Un peu de silence!—Un peu de silence!" He addresses the young ladies, big and little, bluntly by their family titles—"Smith, are you there? Is Jones No. 2 here to-day?"

MLLE. MAURI. MLLE. SUBRA. MLLE. DE MERODA.

The quadrilles form and interlace their movements; a mime glides inquisitively across the boards; a *sujet* hovers over the minutiæ of some intricate step; M. Vazquez does a *pas à deux*, supporting his *danseuse* without missing a poise or a contact by a hair's-breadth. Then the stage is cleared, and in the centre suddenly is seen a woman who, in a masterly manner, buffets a cycle of *pas*, and evokes the applause of everyone present, for it is Mademoiselle Mauri.

All the time, two pianists are thumping through the musical text, and a leader of the orchestra sits by them and furiously beats the measure. The various professors of the dance occupy chairs by the foot-lights and watch the evolutions of their pupils. Right before me at a table are several *sujets* talking, laughing, and snatching glimpses of their future by means of cartomancy. Four of them are bunched lightly on a bench, and thus offer to one of the sportive *danseurs* too tempting a chance to be resisted. So he quietly ties the end of a rope to the bench, gets off behind me in the side scene, and gives a jerk. The ladies fall in a kind of snowflake bouquet on the floor. For a moment there is a brilliant twinkling of arms and legs, while the possessors thereof are spicily engaged in regaining their perpendicularity. Once on their feet

they seize, flushed and ruffled in their discomfiture, the nearest objects suitable to their purpose, and rush out angrily after their tormentor. But he has long since fled, and is probably over on the opposite side of the stage tying another rope to another bench of bare-armed and ribbon-headed beauties.

In an hour the rehearsal is over, and everyone is vanishing between the huge stacks of sceneries. M. Vazquez joins me on the way upstairs, saying: "Can't you stay to my class—four o'clock? I want you to see Mademoiselle L—— dance. She is going to take a lesson to-day—she represents the traditional *danse noble* in all its nobility." So we return to his *loge* to while away the time until four o'clock. We lounge about, talk, finish the buccaneer coffee. My friend would have us believe that the *ennuis* of being a dancer are many and great, and that the arena of the ballet is an arena, and not a couch of roses. He maintains that the theatre dance is in full decadence. His father, however, is optimistic, and tells us that the ballet of our decade averages as well as ever—even better than ever. We prevail on him to revive his souvenirs and picture Fanny Elssler and Rosati to us.

Every few moments some one comes in, as this *loge* is a sort of headquarters in this domain.

Now perhaps it is a youthful *danseur* who wishes to know if he did his *pas* right. "You should dance it more like this," responds M. Vazquez, and he forthwith gets up and illustrates what he means, profiting by the suggestions of his father, who is a kind of mentor for the whole ballet. Then perhaps a plainly-dressed young woman enters and is invited to partake of coffee. One discovers, in spite of her everyday lineaments and garb, that she is a *sujet* whose grace is often noticed on the stage.

As the hour for the lesson approaches, the pupils commence to congregate. In saunters, for instance, a green-eyed Russian girl, to inquire if the lesson is to be given in one of the rooms in the roof, or down in the *foyer de la danse.* She is the daughter of a well-known singer. Her chaperon is her grandmother, who is a magnificent-looking old lady. I feel not unacquainted with the members of the class of M. Vazquez and the *habitués* of his *loge,* so, as Mademoiselle lingers, I ask her, for the sake of saying something: "You are a *coryphée,* are you not, Mademoiselle?" "Oh no, Monsieur." "What, already a *petit sujet*—a *sujet?*" "Oh no, Monsieur," she replies, with an aristocratic shrug; "I don't belong to the ballet—I wouldn't belong to a ballet. I am not going to dance in

public until I am an *étoile.*" "Oh! you are to leap right over the intermediary ranks—that's pleasant to think of." She smiles with satisfaction, and her green eyes scintillate.

Another pupil, who always comes in about half-past three with her mother, is Mademoiselle Lili, a pretty, red-cheeked girl of eleven. She retires to a closet adjoining the *loge*, and, to hear the conversation, appears at her door every few moments with one more layer of raiment off or on as the case may be. Her mother is a bright-faced, amiable lady, and the father is a member of the ballet — all as respectable and serious people in their way as any in the world, for the corps de ballet is composed of good and bad. I ask Madame how she happened to let her daughter select the dance for a profession. "We gave her the choice of being a piano-teacher or a *ballerine*, and she preferred to dance. Why? Oh, because she liked to wear fine skirts!"

And Mademoiselle Lili finally promenades out before the mirror in front of us, and begins adjusting her corsage, and striking attitudes. What revelling in white banks of tulle! She spends an hour daily merely donning and doffing her airy costume. I say to her: "Now, Mademoiselle Lili, when you make your *début*, send me a line, and I will come and applaud." She glances

stupidly at me, for she never says more than "Oui, Monsieur," or "Non, Monsieur," and it is difficult to extract even these words from her. Her mother replies: "You must thank Monsieur—it is very kind of him." And Mademoiselle Lili keeps fussing with her jupes, and occasionally, as she buries a safety-pin in them, pretends to prick herself, and looks up, expecting us to be amused.

As I idle on the sofa in this *loge* of a *danseur*, and muse on this strange little world eddying about me, I realise how different it is from the world at large, and from my own microcosm. I nearly always feel out of place in these haunts, and say to myself, "This will be my last visit." And then some day in two or three months, when a fit of supreme loneliness takes possession of me, I think of the youth and liveliness of my light-footed friends, of the gay strains of music that echo in their realms, of the lights and mirrors and white tulle, and so I am apt to come here for the afternoon, and drink of this *eau de Jouvence.*

For the main charm of it all is youthfulness. The old are young, and the young are very infantile. Almost every one is disposed to laugh, to aërate his thoughts with gestures, to act and

curvet like a child. You are as refreshed as if you were among a company of girls and boys. Mix in with this the constant display of some native grace, and also much acquired grace set off quite freely with the elegant and spacious manners of the *ancien régime*, and one has a pleasing spectacle well calculated to make him forget a heavy hour.

No one, so far as I know, has ever tried to examine fully into the natural history of the ballet performer—of the ballet girl, we may say nowadays, for the *danseur* has rather been eclipsed by her. Dr Véron, the famous Director of the Grand Opéra from 1831 to 1834 or 1835, devoted a long chapter to the theme in his Mémoires, and detailed many interesting facts and curious traits, which showed that ballet people in his day were a class by themselves. He recognised that the *ballerine*, in her love for costume and tinsel, was one of the sex *qui s'habille, babille et se déshabille.* He remarked that, owing to the uncertainty of their destiny, ballet women were very superstitious, and wore an amulet around the neck or a finger. "Nearly all of them," he wrote, "go to the mass, and burn many candles at the altar of the Virgin." What he noted especially was their pretension to parents and to kith and kin. For this reason, they

were almost happy to wear mourning, and proud to tell a comrade that they had lost a cousin or an aunt. He knew *danseuses* to dress in black in memory of a deceased maid-servant, a dog, or even a *concierge*, so far did their ambition to possess a family go.

He emphasised the charitableness of his choregraphic nymphs, and their quick sympathy for those in misery. They were ever circulating subscriptions to help some one of their company who had fallen into neglect. So prolific were they of little enterprises of succour, that he said there is in the ballet girl something of a Sister of Charity. He discovered a greater inclination among *ballerines* to get rich than among singers. A larger number of his *bayadères* than would be imagined were married, led frugal, *bourgeois* existences, and followed their vocation as an honest one. But many of them had no idea of the value and use of money, and he cited the instance of one who, instead of spending her first banknote for the necessities of life, after years of the severest privation, invested in a supply of pineapples, a King Charles, and a parrot!

He wrote that most of his *danseuses* were unschooled and ignorant, yet some of them were well educated, having been taught to sing, play

the piano, and speak English. He had seen *ballerines* reading Madame de Sévigné, Rousseau, Chateaubriand. The members of the decorative part of the ballet were called, in his epoch, "Les marcheuses." As they were a new feature in those days—a result of the Romantic cult of environment—the ballet proper treated them with contempt. The younger pupils of the dance were nicknamed "rats," because they were always running about and nibbling crusts of bread, apples, bonbons.

Were Dr Véron now living, he would find that "rats" and "marcheuses" are obsolete terms. The word "marcheuse" has been supplanted by "figurante." He would find, also, that the existing corps de ballet is two or three times the size of his of sixty years ago, and that the *chanteuses* in our epoch manifest more of a disposition to grow wealthy than the *danseuses*. He would notice, doubtless, the same trait of charitableness among the present *ballerines* as among those of his period; but he would probably remark that the former are less superstitious than were the latter, and also less devout, since very few of them, I am told, burn candles at any altar. Most, if not all, of the *ballerines* of to-day still make, from faith or habit, the sign of the cross before entering on the stage, yet it would appear

that only about one half of them go to mass even once a week, and as for the rest, they go it quite as they please, with some such flippant phrase as "heads or tails" for a shibboleth.

Dr Véron confirmed the traditional statement that ballet dancing tends to destroy the beauty of face and form, for it thins the upper parts of the body by dragging them down, as it were, into its lower regions. Herein Nature merely adapts itself to the circumstance, and strives to attain the desired end, because the upper half of the person should be light to permit grace and airiness in a *danseuse*.

To the question, Does dancing numb the heart and chill the *esprit* and imagination? Dr Véron answered No! Nor did he agree with Lemontey, who wrote: "In the *danseuse*, the 'esprits' destined to nourish the fire of the passions and the working of the brain are turned from their route. The kind of enchantment which seems to surround her does not really exist; no 'moral' [in the French sense] stimulant counteracts the sluggishness or torpor into which the excess of the dance throws the organs of sensibility."

The contrary view held by Dr Véron has threefold weight—that of a physician, that of a director of the Opéra and therefore of the ballet, and that of a patron of the dance from a love of

it. If I had to offer an opinion in the matter, I should say that he is right. Lemontey evidently treated the theatre dance wholly as a gymnastic art. This is too narrow a conception, for there is in it so much that reacts against the brutalising tendencies of acrobatism. The *danseuse* virtually lives in a domain of romance of the ideal. Her rôles, woven entirely of fancy and emotion, her theatrical environment of magnificent sceneries, of magic illuminations and of fairy costumes, her constant aim to delight spectators, all cultivate her sentimental sensibilities and imagination. She learns the seductions of grace and dress, and even her hours of toil are accompanied by—wedded to—visional music frequently of a fine, inspiring quality.

The average *ballerine* at the Opéra, as I have said, strikes one as something of a child. Apparently she acts on the impulses of caprice and of the moment, forgets what she did yesterday, has slight thought of to-morrow, is quick to laugh or cry, to be pleased or offended, to sympathise and forgive, and is pronounced, for the time being, in her friendships and enmities, in her likes and dislikes. She, then, would seem to enchant and disenchant in reality (*i.e.* off the stage) in the manner of children; for to know a child well is to be disillusioned, in a measure,

as to the fascination of the very young, and still their charm remains, in general, most certain and unquestioned.

It is curious that the Parisians manifest comparatively little enthusiasm for the ballet. There is only one place in Paris where people go to see the ballet, and that is here at the Opéra. True, the Académie nationale de musique et de danse has ever depended noticeably on dancing for its abiding interest; but the Opéra-Comique does not court Terpsichore, and the quadrilles at the other theatres are incidents, not permanent attractions. While London supports two immense ballets, and Milan and Vienna are renowned for the art, the one huge display of this spectacular sort attempted in Paris in recent times ended a few years ago in bankruptcy. You would naturally say, without giving the matter a second thought, that the French are ardent lovers and patrons of the dance; yet this does not appear to be the case, in spite of the fact that they have contributed so much to its development. Its technical expressions are French. M. Vazquez and I have broached once or twice to Mademoiselle Mauri the question of this French indifference, and she maintains that, however it may be, it is not due to any dimness of the constellation of which she is the central

star. Her criticism on the Milan ballets is that they indulge in too many features and movements. In this she agrees, of course, with Parisian taste.

You may imagine that perhaps the French find the ballet lacking in artistic ideality, and your fancies may venture to trace the evolution of the modern muse from the antique. As we recall the dancing women in the frescoes of Pompeii, or Raphael's Hours, or loiter among the Atalantes in the Louvre, a deep sense comes over us of the loss to our civilisation of something of wholesome refinement and infinite grace. In place of all that beautiful world of human motion we merely have the ballet. The difference is apparently so marked that we cannot refrain from condemning at once our modern institution in emphatic terms. But they are hasty terms, for there is a great deal of difficult and estimable art in the nineteenth century ballet.

One explanation of the conspicuous contrast between the Greek and the modern Terpsichores is to be remarked in the decline of the art of drapery. The attire formed a signal part of the antique dance, and has largely disappeared in the ballet, because quickness of action has therein supplanted the calmness which evidently distinguished the Hellenic dance. A true com-

panion of rhythmic saltation, under the ancient conditions, was a long light robe, which played a beautiful and natural rôle. The folds of the garments spoke volumes, as all those who are familiar with Flaxman's lectures will remember. In the stately rising and descending Irises and Callirrhoes, for instance, the garbs express as much nobility and temperate grace as do the attitudes of Greek statues.

A gorgeous revival of drapery in the dance has been created of late years by an American. Here labyrinthine vestures are brought into the most lively and intricate movement. In this manipulation of costume, the *pas* amount to nothing. The textures are put into flight by the hands; they are painted in various hues to conform to the varieties of the performance, such as the butterfly dance and the violet dance; and to these effects are added the marvels of prismatic illuminations. Altogether, it is a perfect vision of rare colours, and of ravishing festivities of abundant apparel twirling in cascades or whirling in sinuous racings. Mr Rider Haggard would have considered himself fortunate if he had beheld this spectacle when writing "She." We observe here again that modern impetuosity is insisted on. The garments are kept constantly soaring in the most rapid curves and

convolutions, and one may behold how much they may be made to interpret by agitation, in contrast to the Hellenic art, wherein the draperies, it would seem, were made to speak more particularly of tranquillity.

After all, one may criticise and denounce the æsthetics of the nineteenth century dance, yet an audience of our day would not long be content to witness the slow evolutions of even Pompeian nymphs. We are too restless for such an indolent scene. Modern music and inquietude and our great creed of responsibility, inevitably develop a dance entirely different from that which was demanded by the Greeks, with their love of artistic repose and their creed of fatality. The more one examines into the complicated phases of the ballet, its scope, energy, diversity, the more one discovers that it is in accord with the spirit and traits of contemporary life; and he can but conclude that, on the whole, it holds its own with any other department of nineteenth century art. It suits this business age, where nervous activity and convenience lay down the laws. The present pattern of the ballet will not quit us until the swallowtail does.

The hour arrives for the lesson of M. Vazquez

—four o'clock. Some one knocks and opens the door. It is an *avertisseur*, who says: "Gentlemen and ladies, the *foyer de la danse* is at your disposal." We descend to that sumptuous room. The world of dance has never seen its equal. Thick *portières* drape the entrance; the elaborately carved woodwork is gilded with gold; the side walls are adorned with ambitious paintings by Boulanger; medallion portraits of famous *danseuses* coin the cornice; heavy chandeliers hang in rich crystal displays; and a vast St Gobain mirror covers the end wall, giving a palatial stretch to all this pageantry. Electric lights punctuate at intervals the munificent elegance of the scene, for no daylight, of course, ever penetrates here. The floor slopes at the same angle as the stage, and is carefully sprinkled. Velvet-covered bars, with a gilded knob at each tip, line the room, and spacious settees and *fauteuils* sink in luxury behind them for the weary performers.

Five or six girls take their places at the bars, and begin their exercises. The accompanist skirmishes over the keyboard of the piano. Finally, in sweep two ladies. One of them is Mademoiselle L——, whose *danse noble* I will admire, M. Vazquez has told me. She is a tall, strong person possessing a sovereign carriage,

and manners, and is encircled in furs and a boa, with points of laces afloat here and there. Every one exclaims under breath: "Ah! there is Mademoiselle L——." M. Vazquez favours me with a presentation to her, and then to her sister—a marquise—who is chaperoning her.

The lesson commences, and develops the daily pretensions of the young ladies to sprained ankles and sore limbs. They dread the severe *pas*, and really are not feeling well to-day. M. Vazquez is pitiless and savage, and listens to no complaints. Evidences of simple, childlike human nature are seen in refreshing abundance. It is a favourite way with a *ballerine* to appear to have slipped on something when she does not succeed in an evolution. M. Vazquez will pick up and hold to view the imaginary obstacle, and say! "Ah! no wonder you slipped!" and everyone will giggle save the person in question. Now and then one of the pupils, in a tour of steps, will be beholding herself in the gigantic mirror, rather than nourishing the details of her *ronds de jambe* and *jetés-battus*. A mirror is the greatest flatterer of a *danseuse*, for it unfailingly reflects her as the perfection of grace and beauty. At length M. Vazquez will address the young lady: "My dear friend, why do you keep look-

ing in the glass and neglecting your attitudes? Because you are under the impression that you are pretty? You probably will be some day, but at present you are decidedly plain!"

All moves during the lesson in the intimacy of a conspiracy to fascinate the outside world, and if a young woman, in an energetic evolution, chances to drop a trace of cotton from her bosom, no one is disillusioned or thinks anything of it. After a while I approach the imperial Mademoiselle L—— to venture a compliment on her *ballon.* She is standing at her bar, vigorously wiping the perspiration from her face, and vociferates with a superb enunciation as I draw near, "Quel sale métier!" (What a nasty profession!)

The hour finished, I invite M. Vazquez to a café, and wait for him to mount to his *loge* for his hat. When he reappears he has a lady on either arm—companions I had not expected. We repair to a café in the Boulevard Haussmann. The ladies are his pupils, and are two *ballerines* whose names frequently figure on the posters in big type, like the names of Madame Caron or M. Lassalle. Suddenly M. Vazquez discovers that he has left his ring in the theatre, and darts across the street in quest of it, confiding his *éleves* to me to be distracted in his absence.

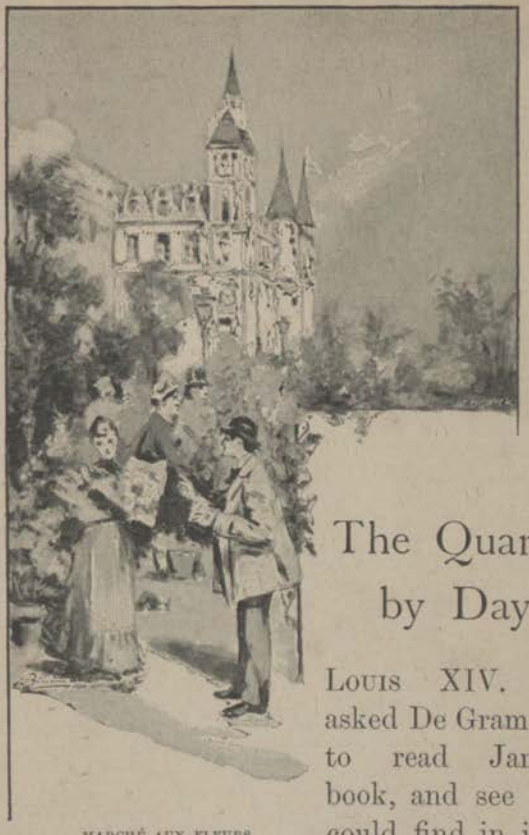
Have you ever had two French *danseuses*

abruptly thrown in your sole colloquial charge? If so, you may know how to pity my secret confusion, and my fear that M. Vazquez may neglect to return. What subject shall I launch upon? What shall I say? At length I set the conversation afloat on the theme of ballet music. One of the young ladies quickly proves to be very gracefully prepared to discuss the various phases of her art with intelligence. Their testimony is that Saint-Saëns, Reyer, Ambroise Thomas, and Massenet (except occasionally in an exquisite strain) are not to be danced; and that after Delibes, the king of ballet music, comes Gounod, and then follow Rossini, Meyerbeer, Verdi, in any order you please.

M. Vazquez soon rejoins us. It is getting dark, and we must separate. I bid them "Au revoir," remarking that I suppose they are on the *affiches* to-day. "Oh, yes," respond the young ladies, "we dance in 'Faust' to-night." As I traverse the boulevard I catch a glimpse over my shoulder of the frisky silhouettes of M. Vazquez and his pupils as they turn into the Rue Lafayette in the evening breeze. And there strike up within me the strains of the Faust waltz, together with memories of Auerbach's Keller, in which I once passed a midnight. "We dance in 'Faust' to-night." The words

seem to weave a vision of the "Walpurgisnacht-straum" across my fancy from the Bastei to the Harz—to the Brocken, where the ever unlucky Heine "viewed the mist and missed the view."

THE LATIN QUARTIER.



MARCHÉ AUX FLEURS.

The Quartier by Day.

LOUIS XIV. once asked De Grammont to read Jansen's book, and see if he could find in it the celebrated Five Propositions, about which there was so much hierarchical fulminating in those Port Royal days. In due time De Grammont reported that if the Propositions were there, they must be there incognito, for he had not recognised them. Thus it is with the Latin Quartier. Everyone "sees" that famous part of the French

capital, where Classic Bohemianism and inexpensive gaiety flourish, but to nearly all visitors the Quartier appears incognito, since the district seems, to the uninitiated, like many other wards of the city. The stranger who comes to Paris has a burning desire to view this Latin domain, and he invariably leaves the metropolis with a feeling of disappointment at having made a dash or two through these precincts, and remarking little that fulfilled his expectations. "Oh, yes, we saw the Latin Quartier," usually has as much signification as saying "we saw the moon"!

There are two ways in which to visit this corner of Paris and know something of it. One way is to make the acquaintance of a student, and ask him to guide you on your tour of inspection through this Bohemia. The other way is to wander through this, the intellectual nursery of France, and look up the spots which history and literature have made familiar to mind. The former is an excursion for the evening; the latter is an excursion for the daytime.

Let us stroll, on the day trip, along the Rue St Jacques, through the very heart of the Latin Quartier, from north to south, and note what the hurried or indifferent sightseer will probably not notice or know of. We start at the foot of this

street, where the Little Bridge ("Petit-Pont") spans the Seine from the square of Notre-Dame. By the way, this bridge is historically one of the most interesting of all the half hundred bridges of Paris. It fell in, in 1206, 1280, 1296, 1325, 1376, and 1393; and in 1718 it burned down, thanks to a curious bit of credulity. Mr Hammerton tells the story as follows:—

"Now it so happened in that year 1718, in the month of April, that a woman had lost her son by drowning, and that her grief was greatly increased because she could not find his body; wherefore the good folks, her neighbours, told her of a sure method by which drowned bodies might be found, and she believed and obeyed them. She took a *sébille*—which is a thick round wooden tray or dish; she stuck a taper upright in it, which she lighted, and with the taper she put a piece of blessed bread, the whole in honour of St Nicholas; she then confided her little boat to the current and watched its course. It floated straight to a barge loaded with hay, the taper set fire to the hay, the men in the barges near to it severed the rope that fastened it in order to save their boats; and now, instead of the little votive taper in its wooden dish, a great blazing haystack floated quickly down to the Petit Pont, where it was stopped by the

wooden piles under the arch. These soon caught fire, and so did all the houses."

The Rue St Jacques doubtless follows the line of the great Roman highway that led from Rome toward Britain. Here on our left, as we face south, is the Rue du Fouarre, the original haunt of the ancient clerks of the Basoche, and also of Villon and his fellows, who lived lives of such gay rascality. Perhaps it was in this street that Villon wrote those lines which are always being quoted :—

"Dictes moy, ou, n'en quel pays
Est Flora la belle Romaine?
. . . . . .
Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?"

The Rue du Fouarre was, one may almost say, the home of the queer French moralities and mysteries, which played such a quaint rôle in the development of the theatre from the bosom of the church in France. This "Straw Street" figures in the history of Pantagruel, and in Petrarch. The tradition or legend of Dante pursuing his studies here under one Sigier, whose eternal light took the form of syllogistic and invidious verities, is familiar to the student of "Del Paradiso :—

"Essa è la luce eterna di Sigieri
Che leggendo nel vico degli strami
Sillogizzò invidiosi veri."

Only one side of the short Rue du Fouarre is left to tell its mediæval tales. Brand-new Paris has demolished the other side, and boldly flaunts the twentieth century in the face of this old, picturesquely-roofed epoch. In the next few steps we saunter into a section of Paris of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is a labyrinth of twisting alleys, which are from ten to fifteen feet wide. The ancestral houses lean over affectionately on each other, or bow across the way to their neighbours. The rheumatism of the ages is attacking the joints of their stories, and makes their façades present a variety of obliquity.

Here Coleridge's seventy-two stenches of the town of Cologne greet us, and we are happy to discover among them some of the delightful odours of certain Italian cities that we love. In the middle of this quartier are two churches. Saint Julien-le-Pauvre dates so far back that they can scarcely find the century to which it belongs. They believe it existed before 580 A.D. The chapel, which is about all there is now visible of the edifice, seems to have been rebuilt under Henry I. about 1050. In its precincts nowadays they dig up plastered tombs and unearth sepulchres formed of shelved recesses built over each other and resembling the drawers

of a bureau. In its yard there is a well whose waters were once widely known for their curative powers. Around and about the chapel are carpenter shops, livery stables, and hen-roosts. The people hereabout lead lives verging on filth and misery.

A few feet off is the rather flourishing, ancient church of Saint Severin, which still exploits superstition in a way quite worthy of the Middle Ages. The choir is covered with memorative tablets, bearing legends like these—all addressed to the Holy Virgin for her aid in helping through a pinch: "A Thankful Bachelor of Arts"; "For my Success in Examinations"; "Marriage Desired, Marriage Acquired." Near by is the Café du Palais, where the banquets of the "Plume" are held. On our left is the Square Maubert, now a clean, bright place, but notorious until within a few years for its slummy haunts.

On our way south up the hill, continuing the course along the Rue St Jacques, we cross the Boulevard Saint-Germain and approach the Cluny. We recall that a Roman amphitheatre was discovered in 1869 in opening up the Rue Monge not far away. It faced and overlooked the Paris of the Island. They were sure that there was an amphitheatre in Roman Paris, because the city had two imperial Roman palaces,

yet its location was not known until twenty-five years ago. Unfortunately, it has been covered up again, so that it is wholly lost to sight. Close by it is St Nicholas du Chardonnet, into whose little seminary Renan entered when he came to Paris as a lad.

While we are passing the Cluny, we call to mind that Musset was born in its vicinity in a street which no longer exists. You remember that pretty story told of the poet's earliest youth. "Mamma, are we going again next Sunday to see the comedy of the Mass?" he innocently asked, after having been taken to a cathedral for the first time.

We now traverse the Rue des Ecoles, which runs along in front of the Sorbonne and the Collège de France. A rod or two away on our right was located Marat's house where Charlotte Corday made her fatal call. The nook was quite the home of the leaders of the Revolution, for Danton and Desmoulins, as well as Marat, lived here. It is celebrated in a well-known students' song—"In the Hotel at No. 3"—

> "Les draps sont grands comm' des serviettes,
> Et c'est l'chien qui lav' les assiettes,
> A l'hôtel de numéro trois."

[The sheets are as big as napkins, and it's the dog that washes the plates, in the hotel at No. 3.]

George Sand had her modest apartment in this neighbourhood when she sojourned in Paris.

We move on between the Sorbonne and the Collège de France. Some one was pointing out the Sorbonne to Casaubon with solemnity one day, casually remarking that this was the place where they held world-echoing discussions for centuries. "And what did they conclude?" he asked. He hit the nail on the head beautifully, because they never were able to reach a conclusion through all those long generations of angry debate. Our attention was recently called to the fact that the Sorbonne never produced a book which embodied its spirit and influence. All its ideas and eloquence simply disappeared in the air. As we idle along, we must bid adieu to the old Sorbonne of Richelieu's time, for it is being torn down. There are three Sorbonnes—the one that was built in the time of Robert Sorbonne, about 1260; the one that was constructed in its place under Richelieu; and the one that is now being erected on the self-same plot of ground under the Third Republic.

Near by is the squalid little Hôtel J. J. Rousseau, where Rousseau found Thérèsa le Vasseur. Going on past the Pantheon we stroll by the spot where Jean de Meung wrote the "Roman de la Rose," about the year 1300. The

street Royer-Collard recalls De Vigny's refreshing account of his visit to get the vote of the old Academician in 1842. The philosopher took pride in declaring in this interview that he was at an age when one does not read anything new, and that he had read nothing that had been written since 1812.

We get over the crown of the hill after crossing Rue Gay-Lussac. In this street lives Mounet-Sully. The great southern slope of South Paris begins now, with the oldest elm-tree in the city (one hundred feet high, and planted in 1605) on our right hand, and on our left the imposing Val-de-Grâce, with its magnificent dome in imitation of that of St Peter's, and with its renowned and faded fresco by Mignard. In this votive structure is the tomb of Henrietta, wife of Charles I. of England, over whose remains Bossuet pronounced that immortal discourse.

Here the Latin Quartier ends. Near where we stand was the garden—the Feuillantines—in which Victor Hugo passed so many of his boyhood days. It appears again and again in his verse. It was the cradle of his muse. Here, too, was located, in the domain of Balzac, the *pension* where Père Goriot stayed. The Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève I have never discovered, but the Rue de l'Arbalete, and the pitching

incline of the ground, are still to be seen, all as described in the first pages of the book. I have often wandered along here, looking at the houses, and wondering if I might not see one that resembled Madame Vauquer's establishment. The Quartier has greatly improved since Balzac's day, and the sleepy buildings are respectable enough; but the lover of Père Goriot would quickly give them all either to meet Vautrin coming along the street and humming his

"J'ai longtemps parcouru le monde,"

or to spy the announcement on one of these doors:—"House Vauquer—Bourgeois Pension for Both Sexes and Others."

The Quartier by Night.

We will now put a little cotton in our pockets, if you wish, and set out for the Latin Quartier on an evening excursion. If we chance to follow the route *via* Pont-Neuf, we pass by a tavern which, although not in the Quartier, is visited by the students after they have had their annual examinations. It is called the House of Mother Moreaux, and claims to have been founded in 1798. Mother Moreaux was one of the non-descript women who follow armies. She trailed over almost all Europe in the wake of the French soldiery. The Government finally gave her a pension, and she opened this shop.

Let us step in. It has an attractive ceiling and a marble floor, for it has been fitted up in a rather costly style in late years. It is, perhaps, the only inn in Paris where guests cannot sit down. Wine is served, if desired, but neither coffee, milk, nor any of the favourite beverages of the typical café can be had. Its specialty is fruits in cognac. All the fruits in the horti-

cultural calendars can be seen here swimming in liquor. They are commonly reputed to be the best in Paris. Mother Moreaux's plums in cognac seem to have the widest local renown. Physicians often say when they are at their wits' end: "Go and take a plum at Mother Moreaux's," and thus the inn has built up a thriving business. It occupies a building of three or four stories, and has an establishment at Charenton where the goods are put up.

We ask for a plum, and engage the young serving-maid in conversation. She says their brandied articles are exceptionally fine, because the fruit is of a prime order. People of all classes drop in for a tipple, and we notice that we happen to be in company with a cabman, a common working-man, and two or three persons belonging to the *petite bourgeoisie.* At length we ask what we are to pay for this fine large plum which has been set out before us in a neat cup of cognac. "Two sous"—astonishingly cheap, when you consider that we have been conversing for five minutes with a promising young woman, who gently insists on interlarding the information she deals out, in response to our inquiries, with proposals to sell us a small household supply of fruits in liquors. And this in spite of the fact that we keep telling her we are

from a Prohibition country! The opaque luminosity which kodaks her intelligence when we answer, "No, thank you; we are from a Prohibition State," is curious to behold, for she has not the faintest idea whether we are referring to a province, the Salvation Army, or an insane asylum.

Away over in the Place Saint Michel we enter the Latin Quartier. The first café we come to in this square is interesting in its way. It is the Café du Soleil. Here the famous Bohemian poet, Paul Verlaine, may usually be seen writing his verses and drinking absinthe. As he is a subject in himself, we tip our hats to him, and pass downstairs into one of the "caves," which are rather characteristic of the Quartier. A "cave" is the cellar floor of a café, and is frequented by a more hilarious company than the café proper. Young men who make pretensions to rhyme and song are invited here to sing their latest productions. It is in the "caves" and the cafés chantants that the immense crop of French songs of the equivocal sort is yielded; and many a well-known Parisian poet or singer has first distinguished himself in precisely this kind of a resort.

These cellars are well patronised by men and women who find great sport in the ballads, and

do not begrudge the seven or eight sous necessary for a chair, a glass of beer, light, heat, company, and entertainment for a whole evening. As we go down the steps we hear two youths talking loudly to each other. The proprietor soon invites them out on the pavement, where we follow the crowd, and enjoy the fun of a Paris street quarrel.

One of the men is poorly dressed and small, but he is evidently brighter than his disputatious companion, who is a big, expensively-clothed young man, with a costly silk hat and a rich noisy cravat—a type one should scarcely expect to see in this neighbourhood. They argue hotly, and flourish their fists bravely under each other's noses, for there is no danger that a Frenchman will strike anyone as Englishmen or Americans are apt to do. In this way the human body is sacred in France. The refinements of fisticuffs and prize-fights—refinements which top off our Anglo-Saxon civilisation—are but slightly shared by the Parisians. No more polite a scene can well be imagined than two Frenchmen of any class quarrelling before people. They observe the courtesies for which their race is noted, and which that French general immortalised at Fontenoy. I recently dallied away most of an afternoon watching two French stonemasons

dispute. It was, comparatively speaking, such a courtly performance, something so refined, contrasted with our graceless and brutal way of quarrelling and fighting in public in England and America, that it seemed a feast for my finest sensibilities.

Our two Spartacuses keep politely warring, to the lively amusement of the arena of men, women, and boys who shy in comments in such a manner as to tease on the verbal hostilities. You may enquire, "Where are the police all this time?" The police do not interfere with any one in the Latin Quartier, unless serious injury is resulting. Herein the Parisians are philosophic. They realise that youth must toot its horn and blow off steam, and the rule is not to trouble the students and their associates, no matter how much disturbance they may kick up, providing always that no material damage is being done.

In the Rue des Anglais we ferret out the vile little retreat called the Père Lunette (Father Spectacles), the most notorious place of the sort in the Quartier. If we happen to walk by this sinister haunt at noon, when the sun is hot and bright, we remark that the door still remains closed, and muffles the sound of ugly voices in this black den. Here three or four bandits and two of their female mates at once place before

us some slouch-eyed wine. We offer it to them, and they sip it with great relish. One of the thieves begins to sing and accompanies himself on a guitar. Another one squats down right in front of us, and proceeds to draw our portrait. Another villain sits up close to us to watch the crayon sketch develop, putting his arm around behind us to hold himself on the bench. Not to run any unnecessary risks, we quietly put and keep our hand on our pocket-book.

The walls are covered with grotesque representations of prominent people, like Rochefort and Louise Michel. One or two of these crude pictures are "Realistic." In two minutes our portrait is done, and given us for the consideration of one franc; and we are free to confess to the robber that it is the best sketch we have ever had of ourselves. The precision with which he has caught the expression of our face, and the skill with which he has idealised it enough to flatter our vanity, are indeed remarkable. The two women do not give much evidence of "hardness" in their countenances. The younger one, a woman about forty, looks as if she might be a respectable mother of a family. After some disputing and menacing, which we are forced to indulge in, in order to impress upon the cut-throats the fact that we are not newly-arrived

"Englishmen," fit to be "plucked," and do not propose to buy what we do not want, nor submit to extortions, we hie to the vicinity of the Sorbonne—the heart of this student land.

Here are the three celebrated cafés of the students—Café de la Source, Vachette, and the Brasserie d'Harcourt. They are on the Boulevard St Michel—"Boul' Mich' "—the main thoroughfare in this Latin realm. These cafés tempt no call from us, since they are in no sense odd resorts. But Rue Champollion, a grimy sixteenth-century alley which runs along between these cafés and the Sorbonne, is filled with characteristic institutions of one kind and another. Let us go into one—a typical café chantant of the lower class. We find a narrow hall, well filled with people sitting at the tables, and drinking coffee and beer. The large man in black, who is promenading back and forth, is the proprietor. He is very handy to have about, because he is perfectly willing and able to oust into the street any one who proves obstreperous. In the centre of the room there is a small box platform, on which the singers stand. We put the cotton we brought with us into our ears, for the songs heard here can almost make a nausea scour the stone stomachs of the eavesdropping gargoyles.

There is no programme. The audience calls from time to time for some singer among the crowd. The invited one comes forward and rehearses his newest song. The words are usually from his pen, and often the music. He is accompanied by a piano. Notice this young man who is singing now, with all the ease of a professional. He wears his overcoat, and holds his hat and cane in his hand. He is very amusing—to judge from the vigorous laughter which he sows up and down the hall. Frequently his selections are familiar to all, and if they have a chorus, everybody, including the proprietor, joins in the refrain. One of the choruses to-night is destined to ring in our ears for many a day, despite the cotton. It is a subtle combination of a good old-fashioned Methodist hymn and a Russian national anthem, with a hint of a Sodom and Gomorrah recklessness woven in.

The leader of these improvised choruses at this café is a character. He is an impecunious Bohemian song-writer, locally known as Gringoire, because he is the type that Victor Hugo drew in "Notre-Dame de Paris." He is a small but determined-looking young man. His eyes twinkle, and a smile fringes the stern background of his countenance. His trousers are too short, and they bag flagrantly at the knees.

We look at the curious assembly. Good and bad seem hopelessly wedged in together, and the scene is calculated to confound the moralist. For instance, at a table just four feet away from us, are a most staid and respectable-looking man and woman about fifty-five years of age. They are well dressed, and are evidently prosperous *bourgeois*, who simply felt bored with lonesomeness at home, and sauntered in here to be entertained in a risky Parisian way.

Two items of interest pique our reveries with interrogation points. One is, Does it not seem strange at first that the University of the Sorbonne, with its Voltairean traditions and its atmosphere of free thought, and that the church Saint Severin, with its elaborate cult of Roman Catholic superstition, should stand here side by side and prosper, and should have stood here side by side and prospered, during six long centuries? The other query is, Does it not seem strange that both St Severin and the Sorbonne, which nurses the young men of France in its bosom, appear to take no notice of the notorious fact that the apartments, whose windows look in upon them, are occupied by *filles galantes*, who live in the most open manner possible with the students, and flourish elbow to elbow with the Church and the University? For six hundred years the

faculties and students apparently have felt the need .of the spectacular diversions of this gay sin, and the Church apparently has been thankful to get its pennies of repentance.

The explanation of all this is to be found, in great part, in the fact that the students are, we may say, absolutely forbidden the society of each other's sisters. Denied by French custom the free and winning intercourse with respectable and intelligent young women, they accept that of the "p'tit's femm's." When the students sisters begin—as they will begin before very long—to dwell here in this Quartier, and prosecute equal educational ambitions and privileges with their brothers, as in so many unimpeachable American institutions, the present Sorbonne fashions in student life and morals will commence to experience most desirable transformations.

In the Rue Cujas, near by the Rue Champollion, is the Inn of Death, which we must visit this evening, for it may die to-morrow, and it is only open at night. It belongs to that class of eccentric and ephemeral cafés which add a weird flavour to the nectar of the fame of Paris. An ashy blue and brimstone light burns over the black door, and we read the sign—Cabaret des Refroidis (Tavern of Cold Bodies). As we enter

the gruesome retreat, a black-garbed *croque-mort* (an undertaker's man) greets us in cadaverous tones. We sit down at a pine coffin, and the *croque-mort*, as he takes our order, moans out, "Four coffins," or "Four microbes," or anything sepulchral he chooses, for only vitiated beer is doled out here. It is the cheapest of establishments. Its furnishings could not have cost fifty francs. The room is hung in funeral cloth with white trimmings. Five coffins serve as tables. Skulls are clumsily painted on the walls, and there is a daub representing a hideous display at the Morgue.

We descend into the cave. Two quasi monks, in brown cowls, welcome us with "Voilà des Machabées." We occupy one of the two benches. We look, through a doorway draped in black, at a coffin placed upright. One of our company wishes to feel the chill and pallor of death, and is invited to stand in the coffin. A winding-sheet is wrapped around his body. The head is left bare. The light is turned on the face of our friend in such a manner that decomposition appears to set in. A deathly white spreads over his visage. His features become drawn; his eyes begin to sink into their dark sockets; his lips wither and fall apart, and his teeth gleam forth; black spots settle on the end of his nose, and it

decays; the bony framework of his face grins at us, and then the bleached traceries of his skeleton are seen. All the while the monk is intoning—"Voilà Machabæus! He dies! He wastes away! Dust to dust! Behold the horrors of death! The eternal worm awaits you all!" The coffin is suddenly discovered to be empty, and the monk cries out: "Monté au ciel!" (Risen to heaven!) Another friend tastes of the ghastly inevitable, but the monks resuscitate him before our eyes. The flesh is made to creep back on his bones, and the colour of life is made to glow upon his cheeks. The monks pass around the penny plate—a human skull—and the *séance* is over.

As we hasten on our midnight way home, distressfully attempting to put to flight the osseous visions dangling before us in some *danse macabre*, the thought haunts us of how profoundly characteristic this tavern of Cold Bodies is of the Latin Quartier. Death locks arms with merriment and free-and-easy life in this youthful section of Paris. In the ballads, in the tales, in the drawings, in the *esprit* of this student world, the deceased gaieties of the grave are courted, and the devil is chucked under the chin. The School of Medicine, with its numberless following, full of their charnel pursuits, keeps this Latin pleasure-ground well adorned with skulls and cross-bones, and

makes a kind of necropolis out of this city of youth. The young collegians prefer to drink their beer from fleshless craniums if they can, and their fair mates to wear love carcass amulets in their bosoms.

Here youth hugs dissolution, and coquettes light-heartedly with temptations, as if scalpel and bistoury had assured it of the dusty nothingness of the tomb, and, therefore, of freedom from endless fire. This embracing of pleasures in the very jaws of the King of Terrors is one form of the eternal problem of the "Abbesse de Jouarre." Herein the philosopher would doubtless find an answer to the questions which posed before us in that concert hall we visited an hour ago in the Rue Champollion. That café chantant is the response to the funeral inn in the Rue Cujas.

And the traditions of this mortuary glee have come down here in one direct and unbroken line from the midst of the Middle Ages. Six hundred years ago and more it was the favourite sport of the rollicking ancestors of these students to live in Holbeinic company with decay, and to "tutoyer" death, in this city which some antique chronicle characterised as "the paradise of women, the purgatory of men, and the hell of horses." The locality of this Café of Cadavers was one great centre of all that

mediæval and defunct jocularity so famed in ancient colour, song, and story, and so quaintly inspired *au fond* by mortal uncertainty or despair.

> "Au la sueur de ton visaige
> Tu gagnerois ta pauvre vie,
> Après long travail et usaige
> Voicy la *mort* qui te convie."

The Romance of a Student's Ménage.

June.

BERRIEN, our hero, is from a province. He is a thin, pale, homely youth, whose anæmic beard is making fitful sallies at growth in dishevelled coins of his face. He receives a remittance of one hundred and fifty francs from home on the first of each month. With this he is to earn his degree in medicine. But Berrien does not offer that kind of a perspective. A Romantic, a Bohemian, he gallantly revolts at the idea of dry study, and of the tediousness of becoming a prosaic professional man. He is a poet — a dreamer, who would ever dwell in the realms of romance. He was inspired with the thought, on reaching Paris last November, that there was no reason why he should not live the ideal in the Latin Quartier as easily as versify it, or, in other words, why he should not strike a bee-line for happiness instead of moping after it stupidly in the long, roundabout way of hard toil and dull respectability.

So he proceeded at once to put his pursuit-of-happiness scheme into operation. He found a companion called Esther. Who is Esther? Well, Esther is not as biblical as her name. She too is choosing a short cut in life, and is, for her part, a Communist in the matter of love. She comes from the gay and bibulous Bordeaux—a *Bordelaise.* She was an artist,—that is to say, she was an equestrienne in a circus that perambulated around provincial France. Finally drifting to the metropolis, she took to dancing, appeared at the Gaieté, and became in time a *coryphée* at one of the national theatres. She was winning ambitious laurels with her *pas de bourré* and *grands battements*, when she began to have severe palpitations of the heart, and her physician told her that she must abandon her profession. Her career was thus ruined—the career into which she had so bravely leaped from her birthright of the circus ring.

Esther joined at length the colony of girls who flit about the Latin country with the students. She is one of those women of the "Boul' Mich'," who frequently buy two sous worth of bread in the morning, eat half then, and the other half at night as their sole sustenance for the twenty-four hours. They think nothing of this, because the next day they may be

feasting at the expense of some generous acquaintance.

Esther is twenty-eight years old, and Berrien is nineteen. She is not beautiful. The bloom of fresh youth is no longer on her cheeks. She is a delicately fashioned person. She smiles easily, has an effervescent air, and exhibits that open-swung, loose-jointed grace which belongs to artistes in athletics and the dance. If Esther has interesting opinions, no one, I fancy, has been able to ascertain what they are. On one occasion I asked her several questions to ascertain if she would say anything worth noting. The only responses I obtained were giggles and nervous twitchings of limbs; signs of festive alarm at the suggestion of any shores of seriousness — a kind of frightened paddling in the immense sea of her ignorance. She is such a devotee of gaiety that she insists on seeing merely the joyous side of her own misery. For she is really a pitiable character, or soon will be. She has no family, no abiding friends, not a sou, and knows not what day she may be turned out on the pavement by her Byronic lord and master.

Berrien, then, arranged a *ménage*—a household. It is located in a small room, up six flights, and right in one of those roofs for which

the Mansards have made Paris celebrated during the last two hundred years. It is just across

THE ROMANCE OF A STUDENT'S MÉNAGE.

the street from the School of Medicine, and looks down on the site of Marat's house. The room is very poor and bare. It contains a trunk, a stand, two chairs, a bed, and there is also a fireplace which is the coldest spot in a French salon or chamber. The French word "fireplace,"

like our word "charity," would freeze the ears of the North Pole. One thing you would remark is that the mantel is not ornamented with the traditional candelabra. A few card pictures and knick-knacks are tacked on the wall.

Over Berrien's bed, which is the typical *lit de sangle*, famous in the world of the Latin Quartier, there are a pair of foils, a pistol, and a human skull—the emblems of death either in a duel for love or honour, or in suicide. He is fond of seeing these objects when he eats his meals, and when he wakes in the morning. Berrien does most of his thinking, reading, and verse-making in bed. I suppose that he would not object to following his medical lectures if this could be done in his room and on his back. He is something like the patriot in the "Queen's Lace Handkerchief," who wanted to die for his country quietly at home, in bed, of old age.

This is Berrien's Cythera. Several wall-closets, however, add some space to his room. A part of the premises, too, is the Mansard roof. One can walk out on it, sit there, and look over Paris. From it Berrien and Esther can peer over into the School of Medicine, and I imagine that Berrien on his roof feels a kind of lofty pity for his fellow-students who have to keep their eyes on their text-books and listen

to tiresome professors. Out there in the upper air most of those wonderful, world-sweeping thoughts come to him. It is astonishing what a high house-top will do for one's brain. Herein Berrien differs from most people—he thinks on the peaks.

He can tell you why Shakespeare would have had a wider renown if he had lived in Paris under Louis XIV. and written French; why the present French Government is making a serious blunder in its course of Opportunism; why Emperor William would better remain at Potsdam, meekly pegging away at the Socialist question at the rate of ten hours a day, instead of pirouetting around Europe in a third-class yacht; and he can tell you how Napoleon could have won by four o'clock at Waterloo without even bringing the Old Guard into action.

Were you to contemplate Berrien's bower, you would exclaim, What a threadbare existence! Threadbare, in truth, is a euphemism, for the existence he leads is very akin to filthiness. It is a lazy, sloven life, whose poetry and joy seem to fade into nothingness as soon as you set foot in the place. Formerly, we are assured, these *liaisons* in the Latin Quartier were wont to last months and sometimes years. Old Parisians

naïvely say that in their youth these *ménages* were the result of sympathy, co-operation, and indeed love. Each member was faithful in all respects to the other, and interested in the other's welfare. They were a rather model sort of irregular household. Nowadays this has changed, it is claimed. The *liaisons* of our time are formed for a few days or weeks. There is little romance about them. They are prosaic, less self-sacrificing, less genuine. Berrien's *ménage* is regarded as an unusual one, for it has run the whole college year.

Now our two friends, as we have said, must get on with a hundred and fifty francs a month. But the curious thing about it is that they spend their money the first half of the month and almost starve the second half. This is a characteristic trait of the Bohemian student in Paris. During the first fortnight of each month Berrien and Esther live on the fat of the Latin Quartier. Esther gets a new hat and ribbon. Berrien procures a fresh cravat and a clean shirt. They sail up and down the avenues and learn of all that is going on with the gusto of the "boulevardiers." They pay calls, and blossom out in every way.

One afternoon early in April I spied Esther and Berrien over on the Grand Boulevards, non-

chalantly promenading in the direction of the Opéra. Who would have expected to find them so far from the Latin Quartier, and in the broad cosmopolitan world of the north side of the Seine? I soon discovered the explanation. Berrien was buttoned up in a new spring coat, and lending prestige to a resplendent silk hat, and Esther was sporting a new robe. Her robe was simple and tasteful. It just touched the ground, so that she had to appear to be holding it with that charming embarrassment which always accompanies this action in the *Parisienne.*

Her spring hat crushes my feeble hope of anything like an adequate description. I do not suppose it cost five francs, for it is not money that goes the farthest in Parisian fashions. She probably trimmed the hat herself. It was decked with numerous spikes of ribbons, with sunflowers and tiger lilies, and with a collection of small Eiffel Towers, each and all flaunting their boldness in a hundred directions in the colossal fretfulness of a Brobdingnagian porcupineness. The hat rim started low down in front, then curved up voluminously on the sides in an immense curl of magnificent sauciness, then down and then up, grandly, tremendously up, in a final, soaring expanse toward the infinite

azure, grazing the stars as its wearer lightly tripped along.

In the second fortnight of each month the problem for Berrien and Esther is reduced to about this: How are two persons to live two weeks on ten francs? You may ask, Why does he not borrow a few francs until his next remittance comes? Because he has already availed himself of this resource. During his first week in Paris last autumn he treated every one he met and lived so well that at the commencement of the second week he had spent all the money he had brought with him, and began borrowing. Berrien owes some fifty francs the first of each month, so that he is always behind. It appears to be a trait of the Latin Quartier student to lend money willingly as long as he has any, and to pay when he receives his monthly allowance.

As a rule, Berrien and Esther manage in the following fashion to exist a fortnight on ten francs. They invest in a sack of potatoes, and eat potatoes, bread, and cheese. Esther is not only an equestrienne and a *ballerine*, but a cook. She will serve potatoes in various kinds of fries to-day, in a diversity of stews to-morrow, and

the next day in an assortment of *purées.* She can do potatoes in twenty-two ways. They stay quietly at home to avoid fatiguing the body and creating an appetite by rambling about town. They have learnt that sleep is the great substitute for food. Thus they contrive to suffer as little as possible from their meagre diet, and can keep soul and body together on seven sous a day each, or ten francs for both of them for two weeks. This is a much less expensive plan than eating even at those amazingly cheap, white-faced places called *crémeries,* which are a godsend in Paris to the Bohemian *qui n'a pas le sou.*

Berrien and Esther, nevertheless, have table boarders now and then. One of my friends in the Quartier tells me that he boarded with them last December. He paid them twenty-three sous a day—ten sous for breakfast and thirteen for dinner. The dinner was in four courses, for if you merely have bread and butter for a meal in Paris, the servant will persist in bringing them in instalments. I have never succeeded in making a French valet understand that I am disposed, when alone and in a hurry, to excuse the impropriety of his serving meat and potatoes at one and the same time. The four courses of the thirteen-sou repast at Berrien's were these:

1st, soup; 2nd, meat; 3rd, potatoes; 4th, cheese. And for this price not only was wine furnished, but a cup of black coffee was included as a fifth course on Sundays.

It was in the cold weather last January that Berrien and Esther suffered most from their penury. They happened to break a window-pane in their room, and as they had not enough clothing for themselves, they could not spare material to stop the opening, to say nothing of having the money necessary to buy a new pane. Without fuel, they were at times almost frozen. They chopped up what furniture they did not absolutely need, and made fires with that for two or three days. Fortunately they did not have to pay a fine of four or five francs a week for short postage on letters from friends and acquaintances in America.

It went hard with Berrien's poetic muse and Esther's gaiety under those circumstances, and I fear they quarrelled more than usual. Quarrelled! One of the conspicuous features of these *ménages* is that they harbour a vast amount of embroilment. Berrien and Esther indulge freely in this diversion. Indeed, the word quarrel is often too affectionate an expression for it — they fight. Berrien will throw the two chairs at his Dulcinea, pound with his fists that gentle head which he

has immortalised in so many a Petrarchian sonnet, and catch her at length by the throat and strangle her until she is forced to sign a treaty on any terms. Esther, for her belligerent share, will pull out all Berrien's Byronic locks she can get hold of, scratch his visage with her finger-nails until it looks like a red-inked railroad map of the State of Ohio, and wind up in a kind of old-time circus fanfare and *finale* by spitting in her darling's face.

The cause of this Bohemian joy and gaiety is this: Esther charges that Berrien loves to behold other fair eyes, and Berrien maintains the counter-charge that he is pullet-pecked. So it usually results in charges back and forth of sundry varieties. When they go out walking Esther makes Berrien look down frequently at the sidewalk right in front of him, so that none of her rivals may have the opportunity of stealing one of his glances. When they sit in the Luxembourg Gardens, she insists on his keeping his nose in his newspaper, so that he won't be, as she claims, "eternally gazing at the women." Berrien, on the other hand, denies these soft allegations; "don't see why he can't be let alone," and so on.

Yes, unfortunately, Esther is terribly jealous. Sometimes an envious fit seizes her when Berrien

is away of an evening, and she locks him out. On his return he proceeds to bang the door and sketch the outlines of a tremendous "hullabaloo." Whereat several cats, that have quarters on that Mansard, are pleased to rub their backs against the moon and to take up the strain in long-drawn-out romantic wails, like the cries of Wagner's Valkyrs, across the night. Finally Berrien gets on the roof, and slips and slides and glooms and glances. On arriving at his dormer window he reaches in through the aperture which the broken pane has left, unlatches the window, and is met by his combative mate. Vigorous hostilities ensue, and continue until he is able to strangle her. This accomplished, they kiss and make up. Then, in order to have universal quiet, they both head a raid on the orchestra of cats that meanwhile have been assembling from near and from far to symphonise the picturesque *leit-motif* which Berrien had furnished.

At last serenity crowns the night, and sleep soothes the battle-weary. Berrien and Esther, for the statistical test of their pursuit-of-happiness plan, have kept a record of all their days of peace. They have done so with charcoal marks on the side of the chimney-piece. From November until May the record stood—Five days free from scrimmages or war!

Once, during the coldest part of last winter, while they were in desperate straits from the lack of money, Esther concluded that she would earn a little each evening by lending proportions to some corps de ballet. Berrien scarcely fancied the project of her appearing before the caressing regard of an indiscriminate public; but she went to the Porte St Martin Theatre, where a spectacular show was being modelled, and engaged as a *figurante* for the consideration of two francs a performance. When she came home and reported this to her aristocratic companion, the idea, having assumed a more plastic form, seemed so repugnant to his refined and high-spirited sense of propriety, and one thing and another, that he decided he would starve rather than consent. Esther never returned to the Porte St Martin.

As July drew nigh, with its annual August examinations, Berrien began to cram. He endeavoured to persuade four weeks' work to answer for thirty or more. If you had heard Esther talk about the matter, you would have thought that she too was preparing to respond to the medical interrogatories. She was always saying: "We're buckling to study now! We're working the ends of our finger-nails off these days! We *must* arrive somehow! Our exami-

ners are a precious lot of old ninnies, who are trying to make it hard for us just on purpose!"

The result was, of course, that Berrien failed to pass. It was so evident at once that he had been unanimously defeated, that he did not wait to hear from any of the "back counties." He parted with his weeping Andromache in only some six hexameters, and took the express train for the unthrobbing bosom of his province. He lives at Saumur, the home of poor Eugénie Grandet.

One of his chums in the Latin Quartier was telling me last week that Berrien faithfully sends Esther a basket of provisions now and then—luscious pork chops, nice broadsides of bacon, delicious pigs' feet pickled in all their pitifulness, onions, peaches. He is said to write enthusiastically of the great schemes of labour that he has mapped out for the approaching school year. This causes his friends in the Quartier to open the peripheries of huge smiles, for they feel assured that he will do nothing of the sort. *Il n'est bon à rien*—"he is of no account," they insist. I remarked to one of them yesterday that Berrien is young yet, and may take a favourable turn.

"No, not possible," was the response. "Per-

haps you don't know that at twenty-one he is to come into possession of one hundred thousand francs in his own right. No hope for him!"

THE END.

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